

医学与生命伦理报道研修班 Reporting Bioethics Workshop

研修班报告 Final Report

主办单位 Organised by:



湖南大学科技新闻与科技传播研究所
Institute of Sci-Tech Journalism and Communication, HNU



中欧生物学和生物医学研究的伦理管理项目 (BIONET)
China-EU Expert Group on the Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine



科学与发展网络 (SciDev.Net)



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National Research & Engineering center of Human Stem Cell.
Institute of Reproductive & Stem Cell Engineering of Central South University
CITIC-Xiangya Reproduction & Genetic Hospital

资助单位 Funded by:

德国贝塔斯曼基金会

BertelsmannStiftung

协办单位 Co-organised by: 科学报道沙龙

China Science Reporting Network



Reporting Bioethics Changsha Workshop

Final report

31 March – 1 April 2008

Institute of Science and Technology Journalism and Communication, Hunan
University, Changsha, China

April 2008



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Introduction and Summary

As China's life science studies have advanced quickly, bioethics has become increasingly important. This importance is increased as the country is stepping into a major destination for international clinical trials.

Meanwhile, public and media interests in bioethics have also been increasing. This can be illustrated by the media reporting waves in several controversial, or at least seemingly so, bioethics researches. In 2005, *Nature* also reported a controversial study and clinical practice in Beijing Chaoyang Hospital where researchers used vertebral cells of aborted embryos to treat bone neural disease. Late last year, the controversial use of a Germany-originated artificial heart in Shanghai's Dongfang Hospital has aroused wide media reporting.

Despite the rising urgency of and the media interest in the bioethical issues, the media have been poorly equipped to report the issue, especially in cities outside Beijing and Shanghai. Journalists should not be blamed for the insufficiency, as bioethics issues are related to both complicated life science research and the difficult ethical issues, such as in the case on how to judge whether certain research could cause harms.

Based on this situation, Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net), an organization dedicated to effective science communication in the developing world, has been actively seeking chances for possible media capacity building in this area.

On the other hand, the Conference on ethical governance of reproductive technologies, therapeutic stem cells and stem cell banks organised by China-EU Experts Consortium on the Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine (BIONET) has offered such a chance. Supported by EU, BIONET events have been designed to provide capacity building for a range of professionals across China and to enhance understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to the regulation of biomedical research and practice.

The fact that BIONET has gathered so many leading experts makes it possible to organise the workshop to train journalists to learn more about bioethical issues, from background knowledge, regulation and the sense to judge basic bioethical values.

With the helps of British Council and Peking University's Health Science Centre, SciDev.Net successfully organised in September 2006 a media workshop on bioethical issues in Beijing. Based on the experience produced from the workshop¹, SciDev.Net worked together with BIONET and other partners to organize a one-day workshop in Changsha in the campus of Hunan University on 31 March. This is China's first medical science and ethics reporting workshop outside Beijing. Some participants of the journalistic workshop are invited to participate in the academic conference on ethical governance of reproductive technologies, therapeutic stem cells and stem cell banks held between 1 and 3 April in Changsha.

The "Reporting Bioethics" workshop was jointly organized by SciDev.Net, BIONET, Institute of Science and Technology Journalism and Communication of Hunan University (HU—STNC), and the National Research & Engineering center of Human Stem Cell in Central South University. It receives funding from Bertelsmann Stiftung and assistance from China Science Reporting Network.

¹ The bilingual workshop report can be downed at:
<http://www.sciencereporting.cn/images/%E6%8A%A5%E9%81%93%E7%94%9F%E5%91%BD%E4%BC%A6%E7%90%86%E7%A0%94%E4%BF%AE%E7%8F%AD%E6%8A%A5%E5%91%8A%E4%B8%AD%E8%8B%B1%E6%96%87%E7%89%88.pdf>

It covers topics in the following areas:

1. The typical ethical issues in biomedical researches.
2. China's regulatory system in biomedical ethics
3. Practical guides and analysis in reporting ethics-related researches and practice
4. Europe perspectives in bioethics, culture diversity and modern life science ethics

A total of 53 science and health journalists (28) from seven provinces, science communicators (7) and journalism graduate students (15), came to the workshop to hear lectures by seven speakers and the corresponding discussions.

Workshop Photo



Ole Doering, senior research fellow at the GIGA-Institute of Asian Studies in Hamburg, joins discussions



Jia Hepeng, China coordinator of SciDev.Net, made a presentation on how to report bioethics

Workshop Programme

time	content
8: 30—9: 00	Opening of the Workshop
9: 10—10: 30	Stem Cell, South Korea Hwang's Scandal and the Basic Thinking of Bioethics ——Herbert Gottweis (Professor of bioethics, University of Vienna)
10: 30—11: 00	Issues on Reporting Bioethics ——Jia Hepeng (China coordinator of SciDev.Net)
11: 00—11: 20	Coffee break, discussion on topics related to bioethics and medical ethics
11: 20—12: 00	Experts' comments and participants' questions ——Ole Doering (Senior research fellow at the GIGA-Institute of Asian Studies in Hamburg). Christoph Rehmann-Sutter (Professor of the University of Basel in Switzerland, Head of the Unit for Ethics in the Biosciences)
12: 00—13: 30	Lunch time
13: 30—14: 30	Typical Ethical Issues in Biomedicine Study and Practice ——Qiu Renzong (research fellow of CAS, the chair of the Subcommittee of Bioethics of the Chinese Society of Natural Dialectics)
14: 30—14: 45	Questions and discussion
14: 45—15: 00	Coffee break
15: 00—16: 00	How to Make Biomedicine Study Meet the Ethical Standard? ——Zhai Xiaomei (the executive director and leading researchers of the Bioethics Research Centre, Peking Union Medical College of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences) Questions and discussion
16: 00—16: 15	Ethical Issues in Medical Practice
16: 15—17: 15	——Cong Yali (professor at the Medical Ethics Centre of the Health Science Centre of Peking University) ——Fan Minsheng (head of medical ethics unit, professor of Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese Medicine)
17: 15—17: 30	Questions and discussion
17: 30—17: 40	The summary of the workshop

Workshop lecture and discussion

Herbert Gottweis, a professor of bioethics from University of Vienna and also a core member of BIONET, became the first speaker. Starting from South Korea's Hwang's stem cell scandal, he analysed the role of media in hyping Hwang, ignoring his violation of bioethical rules and eventually, in exposing his scandals after his case has been investigated by the National Seoul University authorities.

Based on Hwang's case, Gottweis introduced a major question – are the scientific scandals/misconducts often linked to the violation of bioethics? His answers seem so because right science is often ethical science.

Then, from his lectures, Jia Hepeng turned to the reporting skills of reporting bioethical issues which he stressed is very important to patients but not certainly meaning trouble-making to scientists and doctors. Rather, reporting bioethics offer a new angle to think about scientific research itself, as good science is often ethical science.

Then, Jia focused on technical issues of reporting: Where to find news topics; whom to interview and for what; dealing with science and ethical theories; tackling patients or human subjects, making stories understandable and avoiding legal disputes when reporting bioethical controversies.

After Jia's lecture, Chinese journalists and European bio-ethicists made a hot dialogue in the remaining time of the morning. They have focused on the possible conflicts between national interests and ethical behaviours and how to treat the promises of sciences.

In the afternoon sessions, Qiu Renzong, the research fellow of CAS and the founding researcher of China's bioethical field, outlines the basic principles and hot topics in the area, which include human cloning research, the moral status of human embryo, hybrid embryo stem cell research, gene therapy, bioinformatics, and reproductive technologies. Qiu stressed that no matter what approach is adopted, it is key to have a non-harm principle. He admitted that between China and the West, there are some differences on the moral roles of human embryos, but that difference should not become a barrier for mutual cooperation in bioethical studies. He encouraged journalists to widely report bioethical issues, as a way to safeguard the disadvantaged people, namely, patients and human subjects.

Then, Zhai Xiaomei, executive director of the Bioethics Research Centre, Peking Union Medical College of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, analysed how to make biomedical researches work with ethical rules. She said besides the basic principles of non-harm and honouring human being in the research process, a key to evaluate the ethical role is to have a balance between the risks faced by subjects and the benefits received by the whole society. There are some problems surrounding the informed consents in the medical research process. The agreement of patients/subjects should not be the only criteria for the research to advance.

Then, Cong Yali, a professor at the Medical Ethics Centre of the Health Science Centre of Peking University, concretely analysed the tightened relationship between patients and medical workers currently. She says the basic problem underlying the conflicting relationship is the insufficient medical resources – hospitals only receive 10 per cent of public funding and they have to make money to support themselves.

In the area of reporting medical issues, including medical ethics, journalists are enthusiastic, but sometimes do not get enough information and sometimes rely too much on single sources from so-called experts. She was echoed by Fan Minsheng from Shanghai University of Traditional Chinese

Medicine. Fan stressed that when looking at ethical issues in medical treatment, journalists need to think the real situation and restraints faced by individual doctors and patients while considering the general ethical principles.

Workshop Trainers and Speakers

Qiu, Renzong is professor of bioethics at the Institute of Philosophy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), and honorary director of the Center for Applied Ethics under the CASS. He is the chair of the Subcommittee of Bioethics of the Chinese Society of Natural Dialectics. He was the president of the World Congress of Bioethics held in August 2006. Prof. Qiu is a member of the Ethics Committee, the Ministry of Health, and a member of the Expert Committee on Health Policy and Management, Ministry of Health since 2002.

Lu, Guangxiu, MD, Prof. is the director of National Research & Engineering center of Human Stem Cell. She is current Professor and the director of the Institute of Reproductive & Stem Cell Engineering of Central South University, and the president of CITIC-Xiangya Reproduction & Genetic Hospital. Lu's research focuses on stem cells and reproductive medicine, Professor Lu is one of the pioneers in the field of ART. Many 'China Firsts' were appeared in her lab, such as the first human frozen sperm bank, the first baby born with frozen sperm and the first test tube baby born with donated embryo.

Zhai, Xiaomei is the executive director and leading researchers of the Bioethics Research Centre, Peking Union Medical College of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. Graduating from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences with a PhD, Zhai is the pioneering researcher in the field of bioethics in China. She is a member of the Steering Committee of Medical Ethics of the Ministry of Health and a member of the committee of the clinical adoption of organ transplantation of the Ministry of Health.

Cong, Yali is a professor at the Medical Ethics Centre of the Health Science Centre of Peking University and the Chinese coordinator of China-EU Expert Group on the Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine (BIONET). In 1985, she graduated from Beijing Normal University with a bachelor degree in biology. Then, Cong began studying medical ethics and obtained her PhD in 1995 from Peking University. In 2001, she spent one year as a senior visiting scholar to Chicago University in the United States. Cong has been a leading researcher in the field of clinical ethics and the ethics of research in China. She is the major coordinating expert of the BIONET, a China-EU partnership on bioethical researches, and a consultant for SciDev.Net's Ethics of Research dossier.

Gottweis, Herbert is professor at the department of Political Sciences since 1998, and research associate, BIOS Centre, London School of Economics (LSE). He gained his Ph.D. from the University of Vienna (1984) He used to be a visiting professor at the Department of Social Studies, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (1997) and visiting Professor at the Australian School of Environmental Studies, Griffith University (2004). Gottweis' research focuses on comparative public policy.

Doering, Ole is a senior research fellow at the GIGA-Institute of Asian Studies (Hamburg). With M.A. phil. in Sinology and PhD in philosophy, he is conducting a research programme on European-Chinese understanding and collaboration in bioethics and related areas of public health, philosophy and social sciences since 1996. His focus is on the theory of cross-cultural understanding in ethics, good governance, ethics education and policy advice. He is researching, lecturing and teaching in

Germany and China. He has published extensively, among 7 books the monography “Understanding China’s Bioethics” (in German), most recently as invited editor for a special edition of the Journal Contemporary Chinese Thought. Contact: doering@giga-hamburg.de

Rehmann-Sutter, Christoph is Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Unit for Ethics in the Biosciences at the University of Basel in Switzerland and Visiting Professor at London School of Economics. He is chairing the Swiss National Advisory Commission on Biomedical Ethics and the BIONET Expert Group on the Ethical Governance of Research in the Life Sciences and Biomedicine. Research interests: foundations of practical philosophy, biomedical and research ethics and philosophy of genetics. Recent books include *Genes in Development* (2006) on the role of the genome in life and *Disclosure Dilemmas* (in press) on ethics of predictive genetics.

Li, Haoming: Professor Li Haoming is the founding director of the Institute of Science and Technology Journalism and Communication of Hunan University which is the first institute of this kind across China. He worked as the chief of Science Times, affiliated to CAS and CAE, in Hunan and Shenzhen bureaus, the deputy editor-in-chief and vice-president of Science Times. Professor Li has been devoting himself to scientific research and management and sci-tech journalism and communication for more than 30 years. Now he is a member of editorial board of Academic Monograph of Science News edited by Chinese Science and Technology Journalism, vice-president of Hunan Society for Science and Technology Journalism and the senior journalist of Science Times.

Jia, Hepeng: After receiving his master degree in history at Tsinghua University in 1999, Mr. Jia became a science reporter of China Daily and China Business Weekly. Since June 2005, he has been working as SciDev.Net’s regional coordinator for China and is responsible for the Chinese version China Gateway of SciDev.Net. He also writes for the Science magazine, Nature Biotechnology and UK magazine Chemistry World. In April 2007, Jia was elected as the executive board member of the World Federation of Science Journalists.

Workshop feedbacks

During the workshop, a questionnaire was distributed among participating journalists and graduate students, and a total of 39 questionnaires were collected and analysed.

A total of 97 per cent, or 38 respondents, think the workshop is necessary (74 per cent) and highly necessary (23 per cent), and no one think it is unnecessary. Then among all respondents, none of them are unsatisfied with the workshop. 41 per cent and 23 per cent say they are satisfied and very satisfied with the workshop. Astonishingly, 82 per cent of the respondents say they are deeply impressed by at least one presentation/speech.

Most people say they are mostly impressed by Prof. Qiu’s presentation on the typical ethical issues in biomedicine study. While this may related to better personal performance of Qiu, it is more likely related to the fact that people are unfamiliar with the field and need more basic information.

This assumption is further confirmed by the responses to the next question on participants’ feeling on the most useful aspect of the workshop, which, for most parts, concentrate in learning new knowledge of bioethical issues or having new thinking angle. A few of respondents, however, are impressed by the European nation’s advanced bioethical management or European experts’ highly dialectic ability.

As for the uses of the workshop on China’s bioethical regulations, 97 per cent think it is useful and will promote more people involving in the work through media reporting.

Concerning the free comments, 61 per cent of respondents think the workshop should be improved in

quality, especially increasing dialogues and discussion time or increasing practicing. The workshop organizers are aware of the question, but the major difficulties are the concentrated arrivals of lecturers from Beijing – all in the afternoon – and the very lacking of basic knowledge of participants, so that the sessions are more dominated by lectures rather than discussion.

Finally, regarding whether people want similar workshop on bioethics or the workshop to be held elsewhere, 100 per cent of respondents think it is very necessary.

For concrete comments collected in the questionnaire, one respondent hopes the kind of workshop would be held regularly while another one praises it widens the views of journalists and journalism graduate students. Most interestingly, one longer comment appeals while training journalists to learn about bioethics, the workshop organizers – as well as other related organizations – should attempt to build activities to improve media ethics, which becomes highly problematic in recent years in China.

Workshop media reporting summary

Although doing reporting has never been requested by the workshop organizers, some journalist participants did produce news reporting on the workshop for their media outlets. Among them, Red Net (<http://www.rednet.cn/>), the provincial gateway of Hunan, has produced an in-depth new story based on Herbert Gottweis' reflective presentation on media's role in hyping South Korea's Hwang.

Media made Hwang become a hero, and medical and life science reporting should be cautious

By Zhang Shuzhong, Red Net, 31 March:

<http://hn.rednet.cn/c/2008/03/31/1474123.htm>

Other media reporting include:

Internationally famous bioethicists came to Changsha to cultivate journalists, by Zeng Wei, Hunan Radio, 1 April

Dialoguing the medical ethicists and bioethicists, by Peng Hanghai, *Xiangtan Daily*, 1 April

Reporting bioethical and medical ethics workshop held in the campus

by Jiang Jingli, Hunan University TV /*Hunan University Bulletin*

Focusing on ethics: Reporting bioethical and medical ethics workshop held in Hunan University

Li Haoming, *Science Times*, 6 April,

<http://www.sciencenet.cn/sbhtmlnews/2008462241214204946.html>

Cautious attitude on reporting bioethical and medical ethics urged

Wu Zhengyou, *Science and Health Weekly*, Science Times Group, 1 April

Appendix -- Name list of the workshop media participants

Name	Work place
Tang Xiangyue	Guangming Daily
Wu Congcong	Guangming Daily
Xu Shiping	Science and Technology Daily
Li Lune	Chinese Education Daily
Tan Yongjiang	Science Times(Henan)
Li Jiewei	CAS Guangzhou branch
Xu Hai	CAS Guangzhou branch
He Gensheng	Guangxi Academy of Sciences
Xu Liming	Science Times(Jiangxi)
Yu Pingfan	CAS Wuhan Branch
Liao Yang	CAS Qingdao Institute of Oceanology
He Chunlu	Science Times(Hunan)
Wu Zhengyou	Science and Health Weekly
Wan Li	National high-tech and health institute
Zhang Jian	Hunan Daily
Liu Aimin	Hunan Daily
Hu Lifeng	Xiaoxiang Herald
Wan Wenlong	Sanxiang Metro
Li Du	Changsha Evening News
Liu Yong	Hunan Science and technology
Wang Lihui	Hunan TV
Wang Chengshun	Hunan Etv
Zeng Wei	Hunan Radio Station
Zhang Shuzhong	Rednet
Chen Hanbing	Women Today
Peng Hanghai	Xiangtan Daily
Zhou Peiling	Yiyang Daily
Liu Qihui	Hunan Science and Technology Journalism
Fan Tianhou	Hunan Science and Technology Journalism
Tan Zhenming	Hunan University
Li Yin	Central South University
Liang Yanfang	Hunan Normal University
Sun Xiaoli	National University of Defense Technology