

Perspectivas

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Editorial

European Research: experts call for a new renaissance



The European Commission welcomed the first European Research Area Board (ERAB) annual report "Preparing Europe for a New Renaissance - A Strategic View of the European Research Area". This report outlines how the European Research Area needs to develop by 2030 – for the sake of the EU, and of the world at large. Set up by the Commission to advise on the realisation of a European Research Area (ERA), this high-level advisory group, chaired by Prof. John Wood, is composed of 22 recognized members from the fields of science, academia and business.

Janez Potočnik, Commissioner for Science and Research said: "I warmly welcome this first ERAB annual report, which provides a clear vision of what the European Research Area should aspire to. Its recommendations, some of which have already found their way into President Barroso's political guidelines for the next Commission, will stimulate new discussions on how to address the challenges facing European research and usher in a new 'Renaissance'. This Strategic View fully vindicates the trust I have placed in ERAB to advise

me and the Commission on how we can facilitate the development of a true European Research Area."

In its first annual report, ERAB lays out a broad view of what is needed to accomplish a new "Renaissance" in European research. Based on the key challenges facing mankind today, ERAB invokes the memory of the revolution in thought, society and science during the Renaissance as an appropriate setting for the necessary changes in the way we think, work and research today. For this purpose, it identifies six main areas in which it considers action must be taken: the creation of a united ERA, the solution of our Grand Challenges (climate change, energy supply, ageing societies, etc.), the interaction of science and society, the collaboration of public and private sectors in open innovation, the encouragement of excellence, and the promotion of cohesion.

ERAB also highlights the need for an independent voice of research ultimately linked into the political process, and, amongst other tasks, gives independent advice. This recommendation was recently echoed by Commission President Barroso who announced the creation of a Chief Scientific Officer who "has the power to deliver proactive, scientific advice throughout all stages of policy development and delivery."

Moreover ERAB stresses the need to restore trust between science and society, with a new social contract based on the '3 Rs': "Rigour in decision making, political or scientific; Respect for

our fellow man, scientist and environment and Responsibility for our own actions as scientist and citizens".

Finally, the report sets milestones by which to measure progress in the years ahead. Over the coming months, ERAB will be elaborating on these six points in its research, communications and meetings with key stakeholders of the ERA.

Background

ERAB, the successor of the European Research Advisory Board (EURAB) which finished its mandate at the end of 2007. It was created by the Commission in 2008 with the aim to provide independent and authoritative advice to the European Commission on European research and science policy, whose objective is to realise a European Research Area.

ERAB's main tasks are: to advise the Commission on the realisation of a European Research Area; to deliver opinions on the realisation of a European Research Area at the request of the Commission or on the Board's own initiative; to provide the Commission with an annual report on the current state of the European Research Area.

ERAB consists of 22 high-level professionals from the fields of science, academia and business, appointed in a personal capacity for terms of office lasting four years.

Opinion

Ethical Controls on Biomedical Activity¹

The term biomedical activity includes healthcare as well as research activity referring to human beings, in other words, in which people participate, is done with human biological samples, tissues or organs, or in which health data are used.

Quality biomedical activity is that which, in addition to meeting required technical and methodological standards, is developed with respect for certain ethical and legal requirements.

This idea was generated and made public during the twentieth century with several documents, which are considered milestones in this awareness raising, including the Nuremberg Code of 1947, and the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki. More recently the 1997 European Council's European Convention of Human Rights and Biomedicine, and the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights of 2005, also stand out as instruments that establish the common bases in this context.

In Spain, there is a network of control, authorisation and consulting, which includes the participation of different committees and commissions dedicated to assess biomedical research, to resolve healthcare or consultation conflicts, to generate reports or opinions intended for the authorities and society and, finally, to grant authorisations. These institutions have a different nature and composition, as well as diverse material and geographic competencies; however, in any case, the importance of their work has increased since their creation, while there is greater awareness of the transcendence of their involvement.

In this sense, these entities are being given increasingly more committed functions, given that sometimes their ruling is prescriptive and only if it is favourable can the corresponding administrative authority grant authorisation, if it is considered to be appropriate. This happens in particular with some local, autonomous or state committees that have to rule on different modalities of biomedical research, ranging from clinical drug trials to the use of gametes or other human biological material.

This is an especially interesting moment in the evolution of this control system, given that it is producing deep legislative changes seeking greater rationalisation and coherence with the new guidelines toward which biomedical activity is now heading.

In this context, the Roche Institute and the Inter-University Chair in Law and the Human Genome have identified an area to work together for the purpose of defining the somewhat complicated panorama of entities with authority in ethical and legal evaluations of biomedical healthcare and research; analysing their authorities, operation and relationships between them; detect conflicts, defects and dysfunctions in the activities; and indicate the impact of this shortcomings and the ruled foresight.

A multidisciplinary group was created, comprised of lawyers, researchers, members of ethical

committees and the civil service, as the best way to achieve a global, realistic and precise image of the situation. Collaborators bringing experience from industry, hospital management and committee coordination also participated.

Our goal was to reach some conclusions that would provide guidance regarding the exercise of the activities of each type of entity, reflect proposed solutions, if necessary, and develop outreach material directed at all the agents involved in this area: researchers and promoters, healthcare clinics, members of ethics committees, health and research centre managers and supervisors, and regulatory agents and civil servants.

This group has worked starting with the results of some meetings that were held with clinics, researchers and committee members, in which the most problematic issues faced in this area were detected. The conclusions of these reflections were very useful for defining the issues that must be discussed, which was done individually by the group members, and also as a group, given that the contributions were integrated and reviewed by all the participants.

A final document was written, edited by the Roche Institute, that attempted to go beyond a mere statement of legal precepts, and to explain the reason for institutionalisation and expansion of these controls based on a historic description of its origin and development.²

A description of the map of entities with authority over the control of biomedical activity was included, which corresponds to the health authorities, and in which ethics committees play a fundamental role. Standards of different range, geographical scope (national or autonomous) and application, which make up a scattered group in our legal system, were systematised to design this map.

In the scope of research in Spain, as in other countries, the need for ethical review of research projects refers initially to clinical drug trials. But this procedure has been extended to other research. In some cases, committees or commissions have been created to report or authorise research projects in certain areas, such as assisted reproduction or regenerative medicine. On the other hand, the duties of the CEIC have been temporarily expanded by Law 14/2007, on Biomedical Research (LIB), which gives them the authority to report on research projects that entail invasive procedures on human beings, or which use human biological samples, until the Research Ethics Committees are formed.

In addition, there are other types of commissions related to the control of biomedical research activity, whether in the scope of universities, where they are formed with different structures and functions, or of hospitals, to evaluate internal research for their own use, as well as other centres with specialised research activity; or when certain research resources are used (animals for example). On the other hand, in many cases, in the area of biomedical activity, authorisation and

inspection by the government, or ruling by specialised committees, is obligatory.

It is also important to remember that the so-called Advisory Committees perform a relevant function in the biomedical area. On the one hand, Healthcare Ethics Committees, the creation of which was generalised in Spain in the 1990s, have been implemented in hospitals and primary care services, and social intervention services. Their basic function is advising on the resolution of problematic clinical issues that are proposed in healthcare practice. Their rulings and recommendations do not have any binding value, given that the decision and responsibility for the option chosen always falls to the healthcare team or professional, even though there may be a certain legal transcendence, given that a judge may take it into account in his ruling. On the other hand, Bioethics Advisory Committees have been created to advise public institutions on the ethical-social and legal implications of biomedical activities. In the case of Spain, there are some autonomous committees of this nature (in Andalusia, the Canary Islands, Castile and Leon, Catalonia, Galicia, Madrid, Murcia, Basque Country and Valencia), and the LIB created the Bioethics Committee of Spain, as the "state body of a consultative nature on matters related to the ethical, legal and social implications of Medicine and Biology."

In view of this situation, different "routes" of control can be distinguished that the researchers must follow according to the type of project to be developed: research with non-living embryos and foetuses, oocytes and embryonic biological samples; clinical trials, research with human genes, cells and tissues; other research that entail invasive procedures; research with living embryos and foetuses; research that entail genetic screening; clinical research with health product; research on functional foods; or observational studies.

On this path that the researcher must take, where promoters, control bodies, and the research subjects themselves are also involved, a series of difficulties or problems have been identified, which are often coincidentally highlighted by all of these agents.

In summary these "hurdles in the path" of ethical control of biomedical research, refer to the need to motivate and train the committee members; organise, manage and supply the necessary resources to carry out their work; homogenise their actions; streamline and efficacy in issuing a single ruling; improvements in the tracking process; and participation of society and patients.

It is interesting to note that these issues largely coincide with those that have been proposed by the European Commission in its document *Assessment of the functioning of the clinical trials directive*, open for public consultation on October 9 of this year.

The situation right now, fundamentally because of the demands of the LIB, proposes the need for adaptation and is also an opportunity to improve and establish the bases for optimal development of all the entities or institutions with authority in the control of biomedical activity in Spain, in the broader context of the European Union.

Pilar Nicolas and Carlos Romeo

¹ The activity carried out by this work group was awarded by *Diario Médico* as one of the best ideas in healthcare in 2009. The awards were presented on November 23 in Barcelona.

² This document can be accessed on the Web page of the Roche Institute and the Inter-University Chair in Law and the Human Genome.

Latest Chair News

LATINBANKS Project: The study of the legal and social implications of the creation of banks of biological material in Latin America

On the 17th and 18th July, the fourth meeting of the research members of the LATINBANKS project was held in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Hanover (Germany). As with the previous meeting, on this occasion work started with a *pre-meeting session attended by members and open to the general public*. This was followed by the *closed meeting of project members*.

The open session, held on the morning of 17 July, was entitled *"Seminar: Biological Samples and Biobanks for Biomedical Research. Current state and future challenges (III)"*. This seminar, led by Prof. Dr. Jürgen Simon, was introduced by the Vice President of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hanover, and moderated by Professors Götz Frank and Ingrid Brena Sesma. Papers were presented by Professor Drs. Jürgen Simon, Fernando Cortés, Jürgen Robiinsky, Pilar Nicolás Jiménez and Carlos María Romeo Casabona, who spoke on the following issues: *"Research with biological materials. Economic rights"*, *"From basic genetic research to clinical application: towards personalized healthcare"*, *"The projection of the international legal framework of the research with biological samples to a national legislation: towards personalized healthcare"*, *"The projection of the international legal framework of the research with biological samples to a national legislation: Spain"* and, finally, the *"Latinbanks Project. Conclusions and results"*.

The *closed meeting of project members* was held during the morning of 18th July with the participation of the following professors and researchers: Prof. Dr. Carlos M.^a Romeo Casabona, Prof. Dr. Jürgen Simon, Prof. Dr. Salvador Darío Bergel, Dr. Myriam Blumberg-Mokry, Prof. Dr. Ingrid Brena Sesma, Prof. Dr. Lorena Donoso Abarca, Prof. Dr. Emilissen González de Cancino, Prof. Dr. Helena Moniz, Prof. Dr. Carlos Valerio, Dr. Heike Bockmann, Dr. Iñigo de Miguel Beriain, Dr. Sónia Fidalgo, Dr. Pilar Nicolás Jiménez, Dr. Rainer Paslack, Dr. Jürgen Robiinsky, Prof. Dr. Guilherme Freire Falção de Oliveira and Dr. Fernando Cortés. During the meeting discussion and debate on the themes established in the *open session* continued and the material (reports and conclusions) that will form part of the project monograph were reviewed. Versions on paper and in CD-ROM format will be produced by the publishers Bruylant of Brussels. Finally, in accordance with the project's objectives, the members agreed to study the possibility of maintaining and continuing RED MEDNET —through different activities, such as congresses, publications or research projects. To this end, it was decided first of all to change the name to GENJUSNET given its greater legal connotations.

Meeting of the European Xenome Project in Prague

On 8th and 9th September 2009 a meeting took place in Prague on the scientific, economic, sociological, ethical and legal aspects of xenotransplantation. The Chair in Law and the Human Genome was represented by its Director, Carlos María Romeo Casabona, and by Iñigo de Miguel Beriain, one of the department's research-

ers. This meeting of experts took place within the framework of the Xenome European Research Project of which the Department of Law and the Human Genome is a partner.

Meeting of the European Enerca Project in Barcelona

On the 22nd and 23rd of September respectively the first meeting of the people in charge of the Work Packages, and the meeting of all the participants of the European ENERCA project (European Network for Rare and Congenital Anaemias) were held in the Hospital Clinic in Barcelona. The Inter University Chair is coordinating the study of the ethical and legal aspects involved in starting this international diagnostic network.

EurSafe 2010 Meeting

Matthias Kaiser, President of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe) and another two EurSafe members visited the Interuniversity Chair on 16th October, as it will host the 9th Conference of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics (EurSafe) on 16th-18th September, 2010. Researchers from any discipline who wish to make an oral presentation or present a poster session about these or other topics can find detailed information on the conference website (www.eursafe2010.es), or may contact our organisation team at: eursafe2010@genomelaw.deusto.es.

Meeting of the European EU-GEI Project in London

The EU-GEI project, which is scheduled to begin in 2010, organised the first meeting in London on November 4. It was attended by Dr. Aitziber Emaldi Ciriñón.

Thirty people, mostly psychiatrists and psychologists attended the meeting.

They discussed what will be developed on the workpage during the project and afterwards, a scaled list was analysed (questions that would be put to patients to carry out the study, e.g., smoker, eating habits, changes of residence, habits, etc.). They were discussed one by one to establish: which scales will have priority; how much time will be assigned to each of these scales; how often and for how long they should meet with patients; if they could recruit children, prisoners etc.; how they should interpret and standardise the criteria for these scales across all the countries participating in the project, and how the data will be transferred to the coordinators.

In regards to the Chair's workpage, they thanked us specifically for attending the meeting, taking into account that they were discussing technical issues, and our work is more legal-ethical in nature. Our work was discussed (writing ethical-legal reports) and we made ourselves available to clarify any doubts they may have about informed consent, transfer of samples and data, etc. Some specific legal questions were formulated, which we answered.

Experts' Seminar "Beyond Health. Human Enhancement Interventions"

Organised by the Chair in Law and the Human Genome, this Seminar was held at the

University of Deusto on November 9, 2009. Although human enhancement interventions have been a constant throughout time, new technical-scientific possibilities have intensified the debate about them in recent decades. The extent to which they violate ethical or legal norms and what risks and problems they pose was the issue under debate throughout the workshop, along with some interesting presentations. The first presenters were Professor Gonzalez Moran, with the topic, "Ethical and Legal Implications of Human Enhancement Interventions," and Professor Javier Judez, who reflected on the nature of the concepts of health and disease. Next, Professor Carlos Lema Añón and Doctor Iñigo de Miguel, in this case presenting the paper of Professor Itziar Alkorta, discussed enhancements possibilities for descendants. After the break, Professor John Harris presented a paper on Designer Medications, followed by Professor Bermejo Vera, who addressed the topic of Doping in sports. Lastly, Doctor Mariano Aviles discussed the concept of Enhancement drugs, warning about the difficulties of untangling what this means in the complex web of drug regulations.

Defence of Dissertations in the Third Series of the Inter-University Master's in Bioethics

On the last weekend of November, the University of the Basque Country, as the coordinating university for this series, received the Defence of the final dissertations of the students enrolled in the Third Series of the Inter-University Master's in Bioethics. A degree at the University of La Laguna, the University of Las Palmas of Grand Canary Island, the University of the Basque Country, the University of Saragossa and the Rovira i Virgili University, this third series of the Master in Bioethics had 23 students. Among them were doctors and nurses from primary care, and other specialties, as well as professionals in hospital legal services and health administration managers. From this section we would like to reinforce our congratulations to the recent Master's in Bioethics.

New European Projects

The Chair in Law and the Human Genome has been working on a Study on Biosafety for the European Commission since 1st December, 2009, which will be delivered before December 1, 2010. The objective of this study is to carry out a comprehensive review of the standards that exist today in regards to preparing for an attack against biosafety, evaluating any deficiencies, overlaps and the degree to which the corresponding European regulations have been implemented in the EU. Furthermore, the Chair is leading Work Package 1 of the European ENERCA III Project (European Reference Network for Expert Centres in Rare Anaemia), coordinated by Dr. Vives, of the Hospital Clinico in Barcelona. The general objective of the project is to create a European network of centres specialising in rare anaemias in order to improve the diagnosis of these diseases. The analysis of the ethical and legal implications of this work online involves multiple aspects, such as the necessary international data transfer, organisational issues in health care, harmonisation of the quality of the analyses, etc."

Department Publications

Revista de Derecho y Genoma Humano/Law and the Human Genome Review. Number 31. Data Protection in Biobanks - A European challenge for the long-term sustainability of Biobanking (Schulte in den Bäumen / Paci / Ibarreta). *La posibilidad de inscribir en el Registro civil español a los nacidos en el extranjero, de una madre de alquiler (The possibility of recording foreign surrogate births in the Spanish civil registry)*, (by Barron Arniches). *Código penal y reproducción humana asistida (Penal code and assisted human reproduction)* (Cortes Bechiarelli). *El marco normativo para la protección de la integridad en la investigación en Brasil (The regulatory framework for protecting research integrity in Brazil)* (Freire De Sa/Luna Moureira). Predictivity, Genetic Tests and Insurance Law (Romeo Casabona).

Assisted Reproductive Technologies in Portuguese Law-Commentary to the Judgment No. 101/2009, of March 3rd of the Portuguese Constitutional Court (Raposo / Vale e Reis). Situación actual de las bases de datos de ADN en el ámbito forense: Nuevos avances, nuevas necesidades (The Current situation of DNA databases in the area of forensics: New advances, new needs) (Baeta / Martínez-Jarreta). *Bioética y ley en reproducción humana asistida. Manual de casos clínicos (Report of International Bioethics Committee on human cloning and international governance) 2008. Bioética y ley en reproducción humana asistida. Manual de casos clínicos (Bioethics and law in assisted human reproduction. Manual of clinical cases)* (Sanchez Caro / Abellan (Juan Jose Zamarriego Moreno).

Multiple authors: **Retos en la investigación y comercialización de nuevos fármacos (Challenges of researching and marketing new drugs)**, Bilbao-Granada, 2009, page 227. Co-published with Editorial Comares. This monograph reflects on the most relevant issues proposed by the availability in the market of the new drugs as a result of pharmacological research. This is an activity that has, for some years, been very regulated in developed countries, but with escape routes and other specific problems when it is done in emerging or developing economies, in some of which this sector is in full expansion.

The activities of the Department members

Carlos María Romeo Casabona has given papers at the following conferences: Primer foro en Bioderecho, Homenaje al Prof. Romeo Casabona (First Forum on Biolaw, Homage to Prof. Romeo Casabona), organised by the University of the Rosario and the Pontificia Javeriana University in Bogotá, Colombia; II International Conference of Medical Law organised by the Kadir Has University and the Istanbul Bar Association presenting the paper "Nuevas tendencias jurídicas en la negligencia médica" ("New legal trends in medical negligence"); the Ciclo de Conferencias 2009 (2009 Conference Cycle) organised by the International Association of Bioethics (SIBI), presenting the paper, "Seguridad del paciente y prevención de eventos adversos" ("Patient safety and the prevention of adverse events"); the International Conference Bioética en Europa y Derechos de la Persona (Bioethics in Europe and Rights of the Individual), organised by the Pontificia University of Salamanca, presenting the paper "Bioética en la legislación comparada Europea" ("A comparison of bioethics in European legislation"); XXII Jornadas Nacionales de Enfermos Renales (XXII National Workshops on Renal Patients), organised by the National Federation of ALGER Associations, presenting the paper: "30 años de la Ley de Trasplantes: ¿se adapta a las necesidades actuales?" (30 years of transplant law: is it suitable for today's needs?); the conference Perspectivas en la Investigación con Células Troncales: Aspectos Científicos, Éticos, Sociales y Legales, (Perspectives on stem cell research: scientific, ethical, social and legal aspects"), organised by the Mediterranean Centre (University of Granada), presenting the paper: "El marco jurídico europeo de la investigación con células troncales humanas: debate actual y perspectivas" (The European legal framework for research with human stem cells: the current debate and perspectives"); XVII Congreso de Estudios Vascos Innovación para el Progreso Social Sostenible (XVII Conference of Basque Studies, Innovation for sustainable social progress), organised by Eusko Ikaskuntza, Vitoria-Gasteiz, presenting the plenary "Los adelantos científicos y tecnológicos, motores de la calidad de vida en las sociedades modernas: la doble cara de Jano" (Scientific and technological advances, the driving force behind the quality of life in modern societies: the two faces of Janus); II Congreso Nacional de la Asociación Española de Cribado Neonatal, XV Reunión de los Centros de Cribado Neonatal (II National Conference of the Spanish Association of Neonatal Screening, XV Meeting of Neonatal Screening Centres), organised by AECNE in Valencia presenting the paper "Nuevo marco jurídico para el cribado neonatal" ("A new legal framework for neonatal screening"); the Ciclo de Conferencias Cuestiones de Bioética (Conference Cycle "Issues in Bioethics"), organised by the University of Cantabria, Santander presenting the paper "La protección jurídica de los datos genéticos" (The legal protection of genetic information").

He was guest Professor at the University of Bogotá and also at the State University of Salvador de Bahia. He taught on the Graduate Course organised by the Carlos III Univer-

sity of Madrid presenting the paper "Sistemas biológicos de identificación. La biometría: entre la seguridad y los derechos fundamentales" (Biological identification systems. Biometry: between safety and fundamental human rights):

Aitziber Emaldi Ciriñ recently presented at the following conferences: "Bioethics and Health Care," Summer Courses 2009, University of Oviedo; "The Living Will: a Right that Must be Known How to Administer," XXII National Conference on Renal Patients, Alcer Federation, Madrid; "The Course of Action to Control Biomedical Activity in Spain," Ethical Control of Biomedical Activity (CEAB), Madrid. She also presented together with a medical team for the Jaime Blanco Award for research on Down's Syndrome, with the article entitled: "Hereditry of Down's Syndrome: Legal Implications of Genetic Counselling. She has also written several articles: "The Ethical control Paths to be followed by Biomedical Activity," (co-author), *Ethical Controls on Biomedical Activity. Analysis and Recommendations*, Ed. Roche Institute, (ISBN: 978-84-96724-91 4)2009, pp. 71-92; "Personal Rights over an Individual's Biological Sample Stored for Research," *Altruism Reconsidered, Editor*. Michael Steinmann, Palgrave, UK, 2009, pp. 90-102. She attended the Seminar organised by the Blamberg Foundation in support of health technology, Bilbao, and the Seminar "Beyond Health. Human Enhancement Interventions," organised by the Chair. She directed the dissertation entitled, "The Day After Pill," under the Inter University Master's in Bioethics.

Leire Escajedo San Epifanio took part in July in the 8th EurSafe Congress, "Ethical Futures: Bioscience and Food Horizons," held at the University of Nottingham (UK). She presented a work on Clinical Trials with Food. "Consequences of the EC Framework of Health Claims Made on Food: Are We Protecting the Consumer by Means of Human Trials?" which was recently published by Wageningen Academic Publishers. She was also a speaker at the Symposium on Biolaw and Biotechnology organised by the Department of Ecclesiastical Law of the University of León, with the paper: "What's so Polemic about Genetically Modified Organisms? A Law Viewpoint."

Pilar Nicolás Jiménez, has given papers at the following conferences and seminars: the seminar on Biological Samples and Biobanks for Biomedical Research: Current State and Future Challenges (II) at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Hanover, presenting the paper "The projection of the international legal framework of the research with biological samples to a national legislation: Spain"; the workshop on the La Realidad de los Biobancos a la Luz del Nuevo Marco Normativo: Retos e Implicaciones (The reality of biobanks in the light of the new regulatory framework: challenges and implications) at the CIC (Cancer Research Centre) in Salamanca presenting the papers "Régimen de los Biobancos y colecciones" ("Biobank and collection regimes,") and "Información al paciente/donante en la Ley de

Investigación Biomédica" ("Information for patients/donors in biomedical research law"); and at the information workshop on lymphoma research, CNIO (National Centre for Oncological Research), Madrid presenting the paper "Ley de Investigación Biomédica" ("Biomedical research law").

She has published "Concepts in familial cancer genetics: ethical issues of genetic testing," in *Critical Reviews in Oncology/Haematology*, vol. 69, no. 2, 2009.

Iñigo de Miguel Beriain has given papers at the following conferences: Derecho y Salud: soluciones jurídicas ante situaciones conflictivas relacionadas con la salud de las personas (Law and Health: Legal Solutions to Conflict Situations Regarding People's Health), presenting the paper "La objeción de conciencia en el ámbito sanitario" (Conscientious objection in the health field") within the framework of the Summer Course that the University of Santiago de Compostela organised on at the premises of the Lugo Bar Association; the XVI Congreso Nacional de Derecho Sanitario (XVI National Conference on Health Law), held in Madrid presenting the paper "La objeción de conciencia del profesional biosanitario en el derecho español" (Conscientious objection by biohealth professionals in Spanish law); the conference "Perspectivas en la investigación con células troncales: Aspectos científicos, éticos, sociales y legales" ("Perspectives in stem cell research: scientific, ethical, social and legal aspects,") held in Granada in the context of the course organised by the Mediterranean Centre (University of Granada) presenting the paper "Clonación e Investigación con Células Troncales Humanas: debate ético y jurídico" ("Cloning and research with human stem cells: the ethical and legal debate"; Simposio Bioderecho y Biotecnología (THE Biolaw and Biotechnology Symposium,) in Leon organised by the General Foundation of the University of Leon and the Business and Area of State Ecclesiastical Law of the Department of Public Law of the University of León, in collaboration with the Faculty of Biological and Environmental Sciences, the Faculty of Law and the School of Health Sciences of the University of Leon presenting the paper "Pero ¿qué hay de malo en donar?" ("But what's wrong with cloning?")

He has also participated in the panel that evaluated the doctoral thesis "Muerte y dignidad humanas. Un estudio desde dos corrientes éticas: Sacralización y Desacralización de la vida" ("Human death and dignity. A study from two ethical perspectives: The Consecration and Desecration of life") defended by Antonio Marquino Monje at the UNED School of Law. He has also published the article, "¿Derechos para los animales?" ("Rights for animals?") in *Dilemata. Journal of Applied Ethics*. He also attended the symposium: "Transplantation in the Hyperimmunized Patient", organised by IPITA-IXA and held in Venice, Italy, presenting the poster session, "Ethical issues involved xenotransplantation: current trends" by Carlos María Romeo Casabona, María Jorqui Azofra and himself.

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