

# FORUM FOR MEDICAL ETHICS SOCIETY

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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# Forum for Medical Ethics Society Annual report 2023-2024

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## I. Introduction

Founded in 1993 by a group of medical practitioners disillusioned with unethical medical practices, the Forum for Medical Ethics Society ([FMES](#)) evolved into a wider umbrella group for individuals from diverse backgrounds interested in bioethics and a number of other areas of interfacing of bioethics, health, law and regulations, policy, and research. Over the past 27 years, FMES established three platforms — *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics* ([IJME](#)) (since 1993), [NBC](#) (since 2005), and Health, Ethics, and Law Institute (HEaL Institute) for Training, Research and Advocacy (since 2018). At FMES, we conceive both health and bioethics in much broader manner taking into account wide range of social and structural determinants of health; and acknowledging the deep relations between human health and health of the planet as such. The latter allows to conceive bioethics more inclusively to not lose the sight of animal health, and environmental matters which have deep implications for human health and what is now referred to as planet health.

In this reporting year 2023-2024, FMES completed 31 years since its inception. It continues to focus on strengthening medical ethics in modern healthcare. However, over time, FMES has expanded its engagement beyond medical ethics to the broader discipline of bioethics and its various sub-fields, such as, research ethics, public health ethics, clinical ethics. It attempts to engage with emerging issues from the broader spaces of health, ethics and allied themes.

We take this opportunity to report the work accomplished during the financial year 2023-2024 across its two of the three platforms namely:

1. The *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME)* for exchanges between non-medical experts, philosophers and social scientists, medical providers, health researchers, paramedical personnel and advocacy groups. *IJME*, till date, is the only journal on bioethics and medical ethics published from India (since 1993) (Section II);
2. National Bioethics Conferences (NBCs) platform for engagement amongst the stakeholders in bioethics. So far, FMES in collaboration with other organisations including academic institutes has organised **nine** NBCs in different parts of India (since 2005) (Section III);
3. Health, Ethics and Law Institute for Training, Research and Advocacy ([HEaL Institute](#)) for FMES' programmatic work (since 2018) (Section IV).

Finally, **Section V** presents the audited statement of accounts for the reporting financial year 2023-2024, that is the assessment year 2024-2025.

## II. *Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME)*

*Indian Journal of Medical Ethics*, earlier known as *Medical Ethics* and *Issues in Medical Ethics*, is a peer reviewed indexed journal (Jesani, 2012; Pandya, 2012), first published in 1993. *IJME* is the only indexed and peer reviewed leading journal in the arena of bioethics in India and amongst a few in the South Asia region. It was established with the aim of fostering debate and contributing to scholarship in bioethics. With the completion of 31 years of sustained regular publication, it has emerged as a leader in this field in low- and middle-income countries. *IJME* has consistently facilitated opportunities to build awareness and sensitize individuals in institutions of higher education, as well as policy makers, to the ethical dimensions of research and the importance and need for improved

regulatory framework. As *IJME* continued to nurture the growth of bioethics in the country, the need for a platform, where various stakeholders could meet and discuss ethical issues, was felt.

*IJME* continues to face financial challenges but has succeeded in carrying on with continuous publication even after 30 years. Considered a reliable source of healthcare ethics information and policy, our articles are cited by journalists, policy makers, and even the courts. *IJME's* content is used widely for ethics courses.

This brief report summarises the *IJME's* work from April 2023 to March 2024.

## II.1 Submissions received

During this reporting year, a total of 123 papers were published during the year of which 100 featured in the four issues from Apr-Jun 2023 to Jan-Mar 2024 printed during the reporting year and the rest 23 were published under 'Online first', which were to be added in the future issues. The articles included in the issues also consisted of articles submitted in the previous Financial Years.

## II.2. Print issues and their content

As always, four quarterly issues were published during the year. We have been able to print all four issues throughout 2023-24.



The section-wise distribution of content of all the four issues together is shown below:

Sr no	Section name	Number of pieces published during 2023-2024
1.	Editorials	9
2.	Research Articles	13
3.	Commentaries	15
4.	Case study	4
5.	Law	5
6.	Reflections	6
7.	Discussions	7
8.	Students' Corner	2
9.	Creative space	2
10.	Media Reviews	18
11.	Letters to the Editor	14
12.	Reports	2
13.	Obituaries	2
14.	Financial Report	1
	Total	100

### Retraction

In April 2023, *IJME* had to retract an article following an investigation into a reader's complaint of plagiarism. A plagiarism check found that a substantial amount of text in the article "Ethical issues in child and adolescent psychotherapy: a clinical review" (<https://doi.org/10.20529/IJME.2010.053>), published in the July-September 2010 issue of *IJME* was reproduced from a published article (LI Ascherman, S Rubin. Current Ethical Issues in Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy. *Child Adolesc Psychiatric Clin N Am.* 2008. 17: 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chc.2007.07.008>). The authors were informed of the findings of the investigation and the grounds for retraction, who consented to the retraction (<https://doi.org/10.20529/IJME.2023.027>).

### II.3 *IJME* reviewers

We are fortunate to have dedicated expert reviewers who put their sincere efforts into working on and improving submissions. We express our deep gratitude to all reviewers who remain deeply invested in *IJME* by providing high-quality review of manuscripts we receive, an essential component of quality publishing.

Aarthy Ramasamy, Abhijeet Kulkarni, AJ Patowary, Amar Kanekar, Amita Pitre, Aneesh Basheer, Angus Dawson, Anirudh Kala, Anuradha Rose, Arima Mishra, Arun Bhatt, Bhakti Sarang, Bijoya Roy, Biju Soman, BN Vallish, C Kesavadas, Christina George, Christopher Vimalraj, D Savitha, Daisy Dutta, Deepa Pandit, Dheeraj Kattula, Dipa Sinha, Dipika Jain, Farzeena Habeeb, GL Krishna, Gurpreet Singh, Harris Solomon, Hemalatha K, Isha Sinha, J Amalorpavanathan, Jagadeesh Narayan Reddy, Jagriti Gangopadhyay, Jeemon Panniyammakal, John Stephen, K Muthuprathiba, Kajal Bhardwaj, Kangkana Bhuyan, Kannan Thiruvengadam, Kausar S Khan, Kaveri Mayra, Kavitha Kurungati, Kingsly Robert Gnanadurai, Kishor Patwardhan, L Ramakrishnan, Lakshmi Lingam, Leena V Gangolli,

Madhavi Bhargava, Madhurima Ghosh, Malu Mohan, Manickam Ponnaiah, Manjulika Vaz, Manoj Kumar Das, Margaret Winker, Meena Putturaj, Monica Sakhrani, Mukta Gundi, Nilangi Sardeshpande, Nithya Gogtay, Niveen Abu-Rmeileh, Padma Ramachandran, Pavithra Arunachaleswaran, Prabir Chatterjee, Premdas EP, Priya Pais, Priya Satalkar, Priyadarshini Chidambaram, Priyadarshini Kulkarni, Radha Holla, Radha Sundaram, Ramshekhar N Menon, Ranjith Viswanath, Ravi Prasad Varma, Ravi Vaswani, Robyna Khan, Rohin Bhatt, Roli Mathur, Roop Gursahani, Samuel Ujewe, Sangeeta Rege, Sanjana Hooda, Sanjay Kalra, Sanjay Nagral, Sapna Mishra, Satendra Singh, Satheesha Nayak, Sayantan Datta, Sebin George, Shaibya Saldanha, Sharmitha Krishnamurthy, Siddharth Sarkar, Smriti Khanna, Spandana Rayala, Sualeha Shekhani, Subhash Chandra Lakhota, Sudarshan Kottai, Sundar Sarukkai, Sunu C Thomas, Supriya Subramani, Sushma Bhatnagar, Swapnatai Meshram, Tannishtha Samanta, Tarun Bhatnagar, Tijo George, Udaya S Mishra, Ujwala Kadrekar, Uma V Sankar, Varun Bhatta, Vibhuti Patel, Vina Vaswani, Vineeta Bal, Vishruth KS, VT Jissa, William Joe, Yogender Malik, Yuvraj Krishnamoorthy, Zaibunissa Begum.

Additionally, we express our sincere gratitude to the Working Editors Group (WEG), that is, the core group of editors; and members of the editorial board who reviewed manuscripts during the year 2023-24.

#### II.4 Social media presence

*IJME* uses its social media presence to widely disseminate the articles published in the journal and connect with its readers. The *IJME* Facebook public group now has 7.9K members, whereas its Facebook page has 2.3K followers/friends. Additionally, we have Twitter accounts for *IJME* with 2568 followers and LinkedIn account with 1104 followers and 954 connections.

The HEaL Institute Facebook page has 554 followers and a Twitter account with 172 followers. Bioethics news items across media, information on our short duration training sessions, and various events and discussions held at FMES are regularly posted on these platforms.

#### II.5 Indexing

We continue to be indexed in MEDLINE/PubMed, The Philosopher’s Index and Scopus. We have been part of PubMed’s LinkOut facility from 2017 onwards, in order to provide direct access to readers searching the database. The Table below shows the direct usage from the PubMed database over the four years up to March 2024.

Month (2020-21)	Hits	Month (2021-22)	Hits	Month (2022-23)	Hits	Month (2023-24)	Hits
Mar 2021	1535	Mar 2022	1636	Mar 2023	1723	Mar 2024	1434
Feb 2021	1213	Feb 2022	1514	Feb 2023	1484	Feb 2024	1240
Jan 2021	1177	Jan 2022	1456	Jan 2023	1524	Jan 2024	1153
Dec 2020	1160	Dec 2021	1448	Dec 2022	1409	Dec 2023	1220
Nov 2020	1220	Nov 2021	1612	Nov 2022	1928	Nov 2023	1587
Oct 2020	1129	Oct 2021	1561	Oct 2022	1921	Oct 2023	1508
Sep 2020	1033	Sep 2021	1293	Sep 2022	1469	Sep 2023	1373
Aug 2020	971	Aug 2021	1155	Aug 2022	1234	Aug 2023	1160


Jul 2020	1162	Jul 2021	1297	Jul 2022	1369	Jul 2023	1184
Jun 2020	1573	Jun 2021	1346	Jun 2022	1349	Jun 2023	1269
May 2020	1953	May 2021	1539	May 2022	1569	May 2023	1444
Apr 2020	1217	Apr 2021	1463	Apr 2022	1743	Apr 2023	1634
	<b>14,123</b>		<b>15,708</b>		<b>18,722</b>		<b>16206</b>

## II.6 Subscription fees

We have maintained the size of the print issue at 88 pages, with one issue of the year printed in colour. The subscription rates were revised in January 2023 and have been retained for 2024 as well.

Subscription rates for print issue of <i>IJME</i> (Effective from January 2023)							
Period	India (in INR)			SAARC Countries* (in INR)		International (in USD)	
	Individual	Student	Institutional	Individual	Institutional	Individual	Institutional
One Year	1,700	900	4,300	2,600	5,200	110	220
Two Years	3,000	1,500	7,500	4,800	9,300	180	400
Five Years	7,800	NA	19,450	12,000	23,760	430	980
Life-time	86,400	NA	216,000	103,680	237,600	8,640	21,600

- \*Subscribers from other SAARC countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) may please pay the Indian rates with an additional INR 600 per year for postage.
- Agency discount: 20%
- Subscription payments can be made by Demand Draft or Cheque in favour of Indian Journal of Medical Ethics, O-18, Nav Bhavna Premises Co-operative Society Ltd, 422 Veer Savarkar Marg, Prabhadevi, Mumbai – 400025, INDIA, Mobile contact: 07506265856.
- Contact: [admin@ijme.in](mailto:admin@ijme.in) / [ijmemumbai@gmail.com](mailto:ijmemumbai@gmail.com)

 <p>INDIAN JOURNAL OF MEDICAL ETHICS boim-009458561275@boi</p> <p><b>BHIM</b>   <b>UPI</b></p> <p><b>G2</b></p> <p>Payment Through Any UPI APP Accepted Here</p>	<p>The UPI payment of Subscriptions using QR code may not work for all banks when used by account holders from outside India. The access to the UPI payment gateway is only as per the government policy which may change from time to time.</p>
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Early this year, we introduced QR code for accepting subscription payments for easy and quick transactions through various UPI apps.

## II.7 Web management and online submission system

OJS/Cloud, our technical partners for online editorial management system, have helped us customise the system as much possible within the open-source framework of OJS/PKP. The system has been tested for various functions, and changes have been made after



discussing the same with a few of the editors. The system is scheduled to go live in May 2024.

Z-Aksys Solutions Pvt Ltd, our technical partner for web management, have been helping us with issues related to websites and servers. In an effort to be self-sufficient in technical management, we continue to do in-house website management including page-making, uploading of content on websites, and management of the back end. We have been working on resolving technical issues at our end as much as possible.

## **II.8 Updates from the editorial office**

As of March 2024, we continue to have three full time staff for FMES-IJME work. Meenakshi D'Cruz supports the team on voluntary basis as the Editorial Consultant, majorly helping with the copyediting of manuscripts, assisting with suggesting reviewers for the divers submissions, and on various matters.

## **III. National Bioethics Conference**

### **III.1 Genesis**

Several troubling ethical issues peculiar to the Indian context and related to the eastern culture needed deliberation and analysis in a supportive and unbiased environment. Recognizing this need, FMES created the platform of the NBC in 2005.

The formation of the NBC platform was motivated by the need to create space for reflection, open debates, expression of diverse perspective on one single topic, and coming together of people interested in the multidisciplinary, intersectional and intersectoral conversations on issues relating to health and allied themes towards improvement of people's well-being, improving the healthcare system, responding to newer issues with advances in health technologies, and the changing terrain of health issue on account of environmental concerns — climate change.

Although called 'National Bioethics Conference', it does attract participants from the South Asia region, and from the Global North.

All NBCs involved co-hosts and collaborators which has made the platform a shared one despite being established by FMES. NBCs are co-hosted by FMES along with various other entities — academic institutes, and nongovernment organizations from across India. Furthermore, when there are opportunities, the collaborations with international platforms have also been secured in the past. For example, NBCs in 2018 and 2022 involved collaborations and joint conferences with global platforms namely the World Congress of Bioethics of the International Association of Bioethics; and the Global Mental Health Summit. We have been able to maintain this spirit of shared and collaborative platform of NBC over the past 20 years since its inception.

NBCs are organized every two years. So far, we have organized nine NBCs, each attracting between about 350 and 700 participants.

## III.2 Overview of the past NBCs

Over these past two decades, FMES-IJME, in collaboration with partners, has organized nine NBCs with varying themes. [[NBC website with archival of all the past NBCs](#)].

### First NBC

Theme: “Ethical challenges in health: Global context, Indian realities”

Venue: YMCA International Centre, Mumbai

Dates: Nov 25-27, 2005

Partners: 20 institutions

### Second NBC

Theme: “Moral and ethical imperatives of healthcare technologies: scientific, legal, and socio- economic perspectives”

Venue: National Institute for Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS) Convention Centre, Bengaluru, Karnataka.

Dates: Dec 06-08, 2007

Partners: 38 organizations

### Third NBC

Theme: “Governance of healthcare: ethics, equity and justice”

Venue: All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi,

Dates: Nov 18-20, 2010

Partners: 38 organizations

### Fourth NBC

Theme: “Ethical and regulatory challenges in health research”

Venue: Central University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

Dates: Dec 06-08, 2012

Partners: Central University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh and the Council for Social Development—an affiliate of the Indian Council for Social Sciences—Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh

### Fifth NBC

Theme: “Integrity in medical care, public health, and healthcare research”

Venue: St. John’s National Academy of Health Sciences (SJNAHS), Bengaluru, Karnataka

Dates: Dec 11-13, 2014.

Co-hosts: SJNAHS, Bengaluru, Karnataka and Society for Community Health Awareness, Research & Action (SOCHARA), Bengaluru, Karnataka

### Sixth NBC

Theme: “Healing and dying with dignity: ethical issues in palliative care, end-of-life care, and euthanasia”

Venue: Yashada, Baner Road, Pune, Maharashtra, India

Dates: Jan 13-15, 2017

Co-hosts: Interdisciplinary School of Health Sciences, Savitrabai Phule Pune University, Pune, and Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal, Pune.

Collaborators: 17

### **Joint Seventh NBC and fourteenth World Congress of Bioethics**

Theme: “Health for all in an unequal world: obligations of global bioethics”

Venue: SJNAHS, Bengaluru, Karnataka

Dates: Dec 07-09, 2018

Co-hosts: SJNAHS, Bengaluru, Karnataka; SOCHARA, Bengaluru, Karnataka; and SAMA Resource Group for Women and Health, New Delhi

This was a bid based process to be able to host the World Congress of Bioethics, a platform established by the International Association of Bioethics (IAB), a global network dedicated for pursuing work center-staging bioethics discourse and issues. FMES had applied and won the bid to host it along with other co-hosts.

### **Eight NBC**

Theme: Crisis within a crisis: Scientific, ethical & humanitarian challenge of COVID-19

Venue: Virtual

Dates: Saturdays, November 28, December 5, 12, 19, 2020

Co-hosts: Center for Ethics, Yenepoya (Deemed to be University)

### **Joint Ninth National Bioethics Conference and Fifth Global Mental Health Summit**

Theme: **mental health: center-staging human rights, ethics, law and policy matters**

Venue: Hybrid, that is, Virtual + BALM, Chennai

Dates: **Saturdays**, December 3, and 10, 2023 (Virtual); Saturday, December 17, 2022 (in-person at BALM, Chennai)

Co-hosts: Forum for Medical Ethics Society (FMES), Mumbai; FMES’ Health, Ethics and Law Institute (HEaL), Mumbai; Banyan Academy of Learning M (BALM), Chennai, TN, India; Centre for Mental Health Law and Policy (CMHLP), Pune, MH; and Sangath, Goa, India.

### **III.3 FMES-IJME Ethics Awards 2022-2023**

FMES and *IJME* have been working for over 30 years towards bringing ethical concerns in healthcare to prominence and inculcating ethics in healthcare practices, health research and policies. We have organized eight biennial NBCs and the ninth one has been recently concluded. This platform is linked with healthcare institutions and policy makers to create a space for public deliberation on ethical healthcare with the participation of people and civil-society organizations. Numerous individuals and organizations, with their dedication and collective efforts over the years, have made ethics a part of the public discourse on healthcare practices, research, and policy in India.

At present, there are insufficient avenues to recognize contributions made by individuals and civil society-based groups to healthcare ethics and bioethics in India and to honor them for these contributions that are making difference to people’s lives in diverse ways. The FMES-*IJME*, therefore, decided to institute a regular bioethics award that could encourage role models in the practice of ethics in healthcare. The FMES-*IJME Ethics Award* is an event of biennial NBCs.

The [FMES-IJME Ethics Award 2022-23](#) was part of the [9<sup>th</sup> NBC](#) held in December 2022 which was reported in the Annual Report for the year 2022-2023. The FMES-*IJME Ethics Awards 2022-2023* were co-hosted by the FMES in collaboration with Banyan Academy of Leadership in Mental Health ([BALM](#)), Chennai. This time the awards were presented

for 'Outstanding Contribution to Ethical Practices and Improving Access to Mental Healthcare for Marginalised Communities', which are in line with the theme of the joint 9th NBC-5th GMHS (Global Mental Health Summit) Conference, that was concluded in December 2022. The Awards presentation ceremony was a virtual event organized in June 2023.

### The three awards categories were:

**Category 1 | Persons with lived experiences** of navigating through mental health issues turned into advocates and champions in spaces of 'right to mental healthcare'.

**Category 2 | Youth-led organisation** working with marginal communities on mental health matters, especially providing services, implementing innovative approaches to respond to mental health concerns of marginalised communities. Organisations that have been operating in mental healthcare for less than 5 years and the age bracket of the lead/head of the institution and/or of board members and/or overall team ranges between 15 and 25 years will be eligible for this category. Given the complexity of these criteria, the Award Selection Committee (ASC) may use its discretion within certain parameters.

**Category 3 | Community-based civil society organisations** engaged with mental health spaces, service provision, working to improve people's access to mental health services, working to strengthen public mental healthcare services, and may have explored and/or implemented innovative approaches to community mental health service provision. The work of these organisations is expected to be informed by the overall philosophy of making mental health services inclusive; working towards destigmatising persons with mental health concerns, and their near and dear ones; and destigmatising seeking help or treatment for mental healthcare concerns.

### Award prize

1. A cash award of INR 80, 000 (Eighty thousand) in each of the three categories.
2. A cash award of INR 10,000/- (Ten thousand only) to each Appreciation Awardee, and
3. A citation prepared by the Award Selection Committee and read out at the award conferring event.

### Award Selection Committee

Deepa Pawar, Founder Director, Anubhuti Charitable Trust, Thane; Ufra Mir, Founding Executive Director, Peace-psychologist, Paigam and International Center for Peace-psychology, Kashmir; and Harsh Mander, Chairperson, Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi served as jury and shouldered the responsibility of screening the nominations and selecting the individuals and groups for the awards across the aforesaid three categories. [[Award Selection Committee](#)]

Together they brought to the table extensive and in-depth diverse expertise alongside experiential knowledge. More specifically, their background collectively comprised long-standing active engagement in civil society spaces; clinical practice in mental health care spaces and working in the conflict areas; and overall being rooted in public health, and people-centred advocacy in the broader areas equity, healthcare rights, and patient and consumer interests.



Indian Journal of  
Medical Ethics

**SELECTION COMMITTEE FOR  
FMES-IJME ETHICS AWARDS 2022-23**

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
BANYAN ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP IN MENTAL HEALTH (BALM)



BANYAN  
ACADEMY OF  
LEADERSHIP IN  
MENTAL HEALTH

For Outstanding Contribution to Ethical Practices and  
Improving Access to Mental Healthcare for Marginalised  
Communities

**Deepa Pawar**  
Founder Director, Anubhuti  
Charitable Trust, Maharashtra



**Harsh Mander**  
Chairperson,  
Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi



**Ufra Mir**  
Founding Exec Director, Peace-  
psychologist; Paigoam &  
International Center for Peace-  
psychology, Kashmir



AWARDS CATEGORIES

- Advocates/champions with lived experience of mental health issues
- Youth-based organisation working in mental health spaces.
- Community NGO or Civil society organisation working in mental health spaces

**AWARDS CEREMONY**

Will be announced later

We welcome self nominations

**Part of 9th NBC-5th GMHS 2022-23**

NOMINATIONS OPEN : FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2022

NOMINATIONS CLOSE : **EXTENDED TO THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023**

Who can apply?

Any Indian nationals serving marginalised and vulnerable communities and promoting the culture of ethical mental healthcare practice.



Forum for Medical Ethics Society  
National Bioethics Conference

Call for Nominations FMES-IJME Ethics Awards 2022-23

Nomination form for Category 1, 2 & 3

Send us your nomination form and queries at: [fmes.ijmeethicsaward@gmail.com](mailto:fmes.ijmeethicsaward@gmail.com)

Twitter handle: [@ijmeethicsaward](https://twitter.com/ijmeethicsaward)



Forum for Medical Ethics Society

PLEASE DO HELP US FIND A DESERVING CANDIDATE. IT COULD ALSO BE YOU.

## Awardees

**Aryan Somaiya**, Co-founder of Guftagu Counselling and Psychotherapy (OPC) Pvt. Ltd. [[Citation](#)]; **Sudarshan R Kottai, Professor**, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, [Indian Institute of Technology Palakkad](#) [[Citation](#)]; and **Ekjut** (Together building healthier communities), civil society organization and has been working with marginalized and tribal communities [[Citation](#)] were conferred with awards.



PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNERS OF  
**FMES-IJME ETHICS AWARDS 2022-23**  
IN COLLABORATION WITH  
BANYAN ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP IN MENTAL HEALTH (BALM)



For Outstanding Contribution to Ethical Practices and  
Improving Access to Mental Healthcare for Marginalised  
Communities

### WINNERS ACROSS AWARD CATEGORIES



**Aryan Somaiya**  
Co-Founder - Therapist, Trainer,  
Nature and Animal Lover,  
Guftagu Counselling and  
Psychotherapy, Sector 17, Vashi,  
Navi Mumbai

Advocates/Champions foregrounding lived  
experiences and contributing to ethical  
practices for rights-based mental healthcare

Category 1 Winner

Community-based civil society  
organisations

Category 3 Winner

**EKJUT**  
(Together Building Healthier  
Communities)

Plot no. - 556B, Potka  
Chakradharpur,  
West Singhbhum, Pin - 833102,  
Jharkhand, India.



**Sudarshan R Kottai**  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Humanities and  
Social Sciences, IIT, Palakkad

Advocates/Champions foregrounding lived  
experiences and contributing to ethical  
practices for rights-based mental healthcare

Category 1 Appreciation Award



HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS TO WINNERS!

AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY (VIRTUAL) WILL BE ANNOUNCED SOON...



Twitter handle: @ijmeethicsaward

## Awards presentation ceremony

Awards presentation ceremony (Virtual) was held on Friday, June 9, 2023. [[Proceedings](#)]

**Awards presentation ceremony (Virtual)  
Friday, June 9, 2023 between 4:00 and 5:15 pm**

**AWARDEES**

**FOR OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO ETHICAL PRACTICES AND IMPROVING  
ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTHCARE FOR MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES**

**Category 1**

**Advocates/Champions foregrounding lived experiences and  
contributing to ethical practices for rights-based mental healthcare**

**Winner**



**Aryan Somaiya**

Co-Founder - Therapist, Trainer,  
Nature and Animal Lover,  
Guftagu Counselling and  
Psychotherapy, Sector 17, Vashi,  
Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

**Appreciation Award**



**Sudarshan R Kottai**

Assistant Professor  
Department of Humanities and Social  
Sciences, IIT, Palakkad, Kerala, India

**Category 3**

**Community-based civil society organisations**

**Winner**



**EKJUT  
(Together Building Healthier  
Communities)**

Plot no. - 556B, Potka Chakradharpur, West  
Singhbhum, Pin - 833102, Jharkhand, India.

**SELECTION COMMITTEE**



**Deepa Pawar**

Founder Director, Anubhuti Charitable  
Trust, Thane, Maharashtra, India



**Harsh Mander**

Chairperson,  
Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi



**Ufra Mir**

Founding Exec Director,  
Peace-psychologist; Paigaam & International  
Center for Peace-psychology, Kashmir

**FMES-IJME Ethics Awards Program 2022-23**

**Opening of the FMES-IJME Ethics Awards Presentation (10 mins)**

Welcome and congratulatory note by **Amita Pitre**, Member, Managing Committee, FMES; and Advisor, Care Project, Oxfam International, Mumbai, MH, India

Introduction to FMES and FMES-IJME Ethics Awards by **Amar Jesani**, Independent Researcher and Teacher (Bioethics, Public Health), Editor IJME; Mumbai, Visiting Faculty: Yenepoya (Deemed-To-Be) University, Mangalore, KA, India

Introduction to IJME by **Sandhya Srinivasan**, Consulting Editor, IJME; Mumbai, MH, India

Introduction to BALM by **Mrinalini Ravi**, Co-lead Sundaram Fasteners Centre for Social Action and Research at The Banyan Academy; Deputy Director, Partnerships, BALM, Chennai, TN, India

**FMES-IJME Ethics Awards Selection Committee | Nominations and screening process (7 mins)**

**Deepa Pawar**, Founder Director, Anubhuti Charitable Trust, Thane, MH, India

**Ufra Mir**, Founding Exec Director, Peace-psychologist; Paigaam & International Center for Peace-psychology, Kashmir

**Harsh Mander**, Chairperson, Centre for Equity Studies, New Delhi, India

**Award Presentation and Speeches by Awardees of the FMES-IJME Ethics Awards 2022-23 (35 mins)**

**Olinda Timms**, Adjunct Faculty, Department of Health and Humanities, St. Johns Research Institute, Bangalore, KA, India (**Citation reading, 1 min**)

**Aryan Somaiya**, Guftagu Counselling and Psychotherapy Services, Navi Mumbai, MH, India (**Acceptance speech, up to 10 mins**)

**Meenakshi D'Cruz**, Sr Associate, IJME; and former Editorial Coordinator, IJME, Mumbai, MH, India (**Citation reading, 1 min**)

**Sumitra Gagrai and Sachin Barbde**, (Community Lead), Community Mental Health Initiative, Ekjut, New Delhi, India (**Acceptance speech, up to 10 mins**)

**Georgiaria Fernandes**, Editorial Coordinators and Consultants, IJME; Mumbai, MH, India (**Citation reading, 1 min**)

**Sudarshan Kottai**, Dept. of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Palakkad, KL, India (**Acceptance speech, up to 10 mins**)

**Floor open for awardees and audience (5-7 mins) steered by Amita Pitre**

**Closing Remarks and Vote of Thanks (7 mins) by Amar Jesani**

 <b>SELECTION COMMITTEE FOR FMES-IJME ETHICS AWARDS 2022-23</b> IN COLLABORATION WITH BANYAN ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP IN MENTAL HEALTH (BALM)		  <b>CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR FMES-IJME ETHICS AWARDS 2022-23</b> IN COLLABORATION WITH BANYAN ACADEMY OF LEADERSHIP IN MENTAL HEALTH (BALM)	
For Outstanding Contribution to Ethical Practices and Improving Access to Mental Healthcare for Marginalised Communities		For Outstanding Contribution to Ethical Practices and Improving Access to Mental Healthcare for Marginalised Communities	
 <p><b>Deepa Pawar</b> Founder Director, Anubhuti Charitable Trust, Maharashtra</p>  <p><b>Harsh Mander</b> Chairperson, Centre for Equity Studies, Delhi</p>  <p><b>Ufra Mir</b> Founding Exec Director, Peace-psychologist; Paigam &amp; International Center for Peace-psychology, Kashmir</p>		 <b>AWARDS CATEGORIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocates/champions with lived experience of mental health issues</li> <li>• Youth-based organisation working in mental health spaces.</li> <li>• Community NGO or Civil society organisation working in mental health spaces</li> </ul>	
<b>AWARDS CEREMONY</b> Will be announced later We welcome self nominations		<b>AWARDS CEREMONY</b> Will be announced later We welcome self nominations	
Part of 9th NBC-5th GMHS 2022-23		9th NBC-5th GMHS 2022-23	
<b>Who can apply?</b> Any Indian nationals serving marginalised and vulnerable communities and promoting the culture of ethical mental healthcare practice.		<b>Who can apply?</b> Any Indian nationals in the awards categories serving marginalised and vulnerable communities and promoting the culture of ethical mental healthcare practice.	
NOMINATIONS OPEN : FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2022 NOMINATIONS CLOSE : <b>EXTENDED TO THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023</b>		NOMINATIONS OPEN : DECEMBER 23, 2022 NOMINATION CLOSE : <b>EXTENDED TO THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2023</b>	
 Call for Nominations FMES-IJME Ethics Awards 2022-23 Nomination form for Category 1, 2 & 3 Send us your nomination form and queries at: <a href="mailto:fmes.ijmeethicsaward@gmail.com">fmes.ijmeethicsaward@gmail.com</a> Twitter handle: @ijmeethicsaward		 Call for Nominations FMES-IJME Ethics Awards 2022-23 Nomination form for Category 1, 2, & 3 For queries, please write to us at: <a href="mailto:fmes.ijmeethicsaward@gmail.com">fmes.ijmeethicsaward@gmail.com</a> Twitter handle: @ijmeethicsaward	
PLEASE DO HELP US FIND A DESERVING CANDIDATE. IT COULD ALSO BE YOU.		PLEASE DO HELP US FIND A DESERVING CANDIDATE. IT COULD ALSO BE YOU.	

### III.4 10<sup>th</sup> National Bioethics Conference

The 10<sup>th</sup> NBC is scheduled to be held on Friday and Saturday, January 30 and 31, 2025. In the reporting period we had just begun the preparatory work for the same. The conference theme will be, 'AI In Health Care: Ethics, Law, And Human Rights Matters'. The Indian Institute of Technology-Madars, Chennai, and the Bioethics Department, Christian Medical College, Vellore have joined FMES-IJME-HEaL Institute as co-hosts.

The theme is timely and relevant for more than one reason. These include, first and foremost, its unique features leading to unique opportunities but also unique challenges it throws; fast-paced growth; appears to be largely driven by commercial interest of the private players; government's interest in the potential AI technologies offer to boosting this space economically; the aspirations the government garners to excel in this space to be a global leader; little conversation on AI health technology and ethics-governance-policy matters; conspicuous by its absence is the conversation and engagement with the prospective users, both health care providers and people as key stakeholders and as collaborators.

In Indian context, AI health technologies are being developed and deployed. However, there is a need for deeper, grounded, and informed discussions and debates on range of aspects, especially relating to policy, ethics, regulations, laws, governance, and human rights amongst the diverse stakeholders relevant to AI health technology and allied spaces. Such conversations and discourse would help towards making the AI health technology space ethically and scientifically sound, be transparent, open for critique, and enable mid-stream correction all the time.



The 10<sup>th</sup> NBC is aimed providing a platform for such discussions and debates by bringing together diverse stakeholders; to learn from each other; and to inform the discourse from multidisciplinary perspective and by paying attention to theoretical, epistemological, and pragmatic considerations. More specifically, it is to appreciate the current canvas of AI health technology development in India; understand policy-ethics- regulatory- legal-governance and human rights perspective on AI health technologies. It is to discuss and deliberate upon AI health technology developers are confronted with and how they navigated through them on the pathways of technology development, such as, conceptions, development, testing, deployment, and post-deployment.

It is important to locate AI health technologies and ethics of AI discourse in the larger ecosystem of health care system, health care delivery and health research in India. Given the specificities of AI technologies in general and AI health technologies in particular, it is important to understand Indian ecosystem's preparedness to embrace AI health technologies and if they can contribute to strengthening health justice or otherwise.

Furthermore, we also locate AI health technologies in the historical context of the evolution of health technologies and ethics, and governance discourse around it. Amongst other matters, there is much to draw upon, particularly from the scholarship in the area of health technology assessment (HTA). HTA has centre-staged governance systems, and assessment systems to ensure such technologies remain relevant, safe, fair, and resource efficient by considering voices of diverse experts on the one hand, and users of said technologies on the other hand.

Against this backdrop, we believe that the 10<sup>th</sup> NBC platform will offer an opportunity to contribute to the multidisciplinary discourse on AI health technology centre-staging people and their health care needs with focus on India. The conference will comprise of plenaries, workshops, and training institutes.

#### **IV. Health, Ethics and Law Institute (HEaL Institute) For Training, Research and Advocacy**

The Health, Ethics and Law Institute ([HEaL Institute](#)) for Training, Research and Advocacy, a programmatic platform of FMES is the youngest one amongst the three platforms of FMES. It was established in 2018-2019 to pursue FMES' programmatic work in the domains of health and bioethics; and engages itself into trainings, research, public engagement, and advocacy activities on contemporary issues.

During the reporting year, we continued with routine activities, such as, publishing fortnightly digest, and research related engagement. We continued our efforts of writing grant proposals to pursue the work at HEaL Institute. There were no new funded projects implemented.

##### **IV.1 Research engagement**

We continued with the data engagement relating to [the project](#) titled 'A collaborative research initiative cataloguing key community engagement practices embedded in Implementation Research Public Health Projects Involving Disadvantaged

(rural/indigenous) Communities in India’ supported by the WHO-TDR. The last two annual reports detailed the inception and implementation of this project.

Although the funds are exhausted and project is administratively closed, we continued with data analysis of the empirical research undertaken during the project period, writings, and presentations of the emerging works from these data sets.

FMES members continued to publish their works in academic journals including in *IJME* as they always do.

## IV.2 Advocacy and media engagement

A [detailed critical comment](#) was submitted in response to the call for public consultation-engagement by the ICMR on its consensus policy statement titled, ‘The ethical conduct of controlled human infection studies (CHIS) In India.

FMES members continue to engage with media. This includes writings in the popular press, and media reporting the views of FMES members from time to time on diverse health and ethics issues.

## IV.3 Fortnightly Digest

We started crafting and disseminating fortnightly digest in Aug 2020. It has been aimed at updating e our readers and peers about all the activities of FMES, HEaL, and IJME that took place in the previous fortnight along with curated information from the peer spaces. The first Fortnightly Digest was sent out on August 11, 2020.

During this report year 2023-24 we curated and disseminated 23 Fortnightly Digests. [[Archive of the Fortnightly Digests](#)].

## V. Audited accounts 2023-2024

..... **To insert here** once the FMES’ audited statement is approved and signed by MC office bearers ....

----- **End of the FMES Annual Report for FY 2023-2024** -----

