

Bioethics as a cornerstone: assessing and modifying the hidden curriculum in medical education

La bioéthique comme pierre angulaire : évaluer et modifier le programme caché de l'enseignement médical

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Dear Editors,

I read with great interest the article published by Li et al.,¹ which describes with remarkable precision the influence of the hidden curriculum in medical education. The work stands out for its sound methodological foundation and the epistemological development it provides to this topic increasingly studied worldwide. However, it only includes literature published in English. This is where I believe my letter can contribute relevant information from my research in Latin America, enriching the discussion on the hidden curriculum and allowing the medical professor to evaluate and modify it.

The hidden curriculum has been defined in various ways, which can be summarized as the set of norms, values, beliefs, and behaviors that medical students learn, without these learnings having been planned in the formal curriculum.²

For its part, "principlist" bioethics is not only a set of principles, but a form of critical and reflective thinking that questions the values, practices, and power structures in medicine that are passively taught in medical schools.²

Bioethics is therefore the cornerstone for modifying the hidden curriculum, through three fundamental axes: visualizing organizational culture by questioning the practices developed by teachers in learning environments; modifying pre-established hierarchies by prioritizing critical and scientific thinking over obedience; and eliminating the

dissonance between what is learned theoretically and what is experienced in clinical practice.²

The ability to assess and modify the hidden curriculum should be a fundamental skill for medical teachers. By developing this ability, they will be able to train new professionals with a more humanistic approach, distancing them from practices that contradict the principles of bioethics.³

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