



Ethics and International Cooperation in the Face of Global Health Crises

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Editorial

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The global crisis generated by the Covid-19 pandemic, which not only had health or epidemiological effects, was yet another element that increased the questioning of international cooperation in the face of health crises that endanger humanity. In this sense, it is necessary to highlight that the preconditions for the emergence of such a pandemic reveal that international cooperation in the face of crises of this nature has been insufficient.

At the same time, the level of affectation of the pandemic was not the same between people or between nations; some studies have indicated an unequal distribution among the affected groups, with a focus on the populations that are most vulnerable; which makes evident discrimination and various social asymmetries derived from intersectionality factors: age, nationality, gender, race, disability, among others [1].

Consequently, if it is taken into account that the universal premise of ethics is the good as a benefit and common need for all people, the problem of universal access to health services for all is currently placed in the foreground, decisive objective insofar as it deals with the highest value: health. An issue that is impossible without international cooperation given the magnitude of the problems to be overcome and the demand for the necessary resources.

The concrete facts, to which we all have access, show that the management of global health crises brings the need for a change in the relationship between ethics and international cooperation, between the normative and the instrumental in participation, commitment, intervention, contribution

and accompaniment of the public health problems that are now occurring and others that are yet to come. In addition, the traditional conception of equity, international political relations, as well as health policies must be transformed and the health of specific people must be placed as a problem for all.

Ethics indicates that international cooperation, in the face of global health crises, needs to be corrected or expanded to incorporate systematic action towards unfair health inequalities, which occur before the health crises break out, and the sick reach the health system. In this same sense, the traditional autonomist bias of bioethics must be replaced by a priority concern for social justice and its relationship with health.

In addition, for international cooperation in the face of global health crises to be a good shared by humanity, it is essential that it be valued as good and fair. Also that this cooperation assumes quality of value between what is good and what is fair, specifically erected as an inalienable human right that politically, civically and from the market guides a citizenry, increasingly inclusive and included, in values of freedom, security, trust and harmony shared between all and all.

In other words, a new type of international, innovative, ethically founded and creative cooperation is imposed because there is no precedent of what today becomes essential. It is demanded to articulate compliance with hygienic, sanitary, epidemiological, technological, technical

standards, in all areas where humanity acts that make consumption patterns, coexistence, care for the environment and the biosphere sustainable.

Ethics indicates that international cooperation, in order to effectively manage global health problems, must be based on individual, social and international compliance by the majority under the establishment of relationships tending to co-responsibility focused and all focused on achieving the common good. Such a decision implies a new conception of people, things, cooperation, human and non-human health; opting for the good of people and nature through the individual; tangible fact that will free public ethics from simple abstraction or utopia.

The improvement of international cooperation implies questioning the bases on which the existing international cooperation system is based. The lack of consensus regarding how to articulate multilateral actions to face Covid-19 indicates the growing dependence of the World Health Organization on private taxpayers, as well as the lack of leadership at regional and global levels to conduct crisis management [2] and the growing importance of the private sector in international cooperation on health issues [3,4].

In international cooperation, in the face of global health crises, the application of ethics cannot be postponed because it deals with the life and destinies of humanity; it is in this significant place that it must be located. When these crises take place, such as HIV/AIDS, SARS, influenza and Covid-19, the effects expand to all scenarios and among them the decision-making, its consequences and the manifestations in the life of societies stand out. Ethical foundations help dignity, justice, solidarity and responsibility to prevail over selfishness, pettiness and fanaticism; both at the individual, community, national, regional and international levels.

The global health crises have configured a revealing future of the accumulated shortcomings in international cooperation. These crises, by constituting threats against fundamental values, especially against the lives of people

and nature, the stability of social systems and international relations require urgent corrective actions. The current context places the transformations to be implemented, in international cooperation, at the center of the debate. If we consider that crises transcend as catalysts for change [5], then the necessary adjustments must be implemented without further delay.

Today, overcoming the prevailing patterns in international cooperation for global health issues cannot be postponed, which will contribute to the configuration of a fairer, less consumerist and more supportive “post-Covid” world. This world, without the ethical content that international cooperation needs, will be a chimera as long as multilateral and concerted action is required among all nations; issue determined by solidarity among all people, nations and states; especially, between powers and more developed countries with the most backward and least disadvantaged countries.

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