

Ethics in pharmacological treatments: prospects and social philosophy for a fair access to innovation

R. Bernardini¹, F. Sciacca², P. Russo², R. Di Mauro¹, G. Recchia³, C. Muzzio³, G. Cantarella¹, S. Veca⁴

¹Dept. of Biomedical Science and Biotechnology, Pharmacology Unit, University of Catania

²Dept. of Political Science, University of Catania

³GSK Medical Dept., Verona, Italy

⁴IUSS, Pavia

The cure of the disease is a social and political ideal which calls into question ethics and collective responsibility. In fact, the cure implies reciprocity and intersubjectivity, which are essential elements of well being in the society. In particular, access to care is a social right and also a human right, and it should be recognized universally to all individuals as persons. Reflecting on the duty to remove the barriers that prevent the full realization of this right is a matter of primary importance for the political philosophy and health.

Difficulties related to the sustainability of health care expenditure (in which the spending on pharmaceuticals is one of the most visible, albeit minor, components) are aspects to solve or manage in order to ensure an equal access to highly innovative therapies, which in many cases are disease modifying, through an appropriate balancing of the various interests involved.

The achievement of this goal has a potential positive impact on research and production as well as on the labor market, placing the focus on individual health status and its related economic aspects, for both a fair remuneration of pharmaceutical companies that bears the costs and risks related to research and the health system user of such research. The elaboration of proposals aimed to consider the drug as a social tool to reconcile the right to health with sustainability aspects is the first objective of a journey that begins with a dialogue between institutions, regulators, manufacturers and experts from various disciplines.