



Teaching bioethics using a COVID-19 pandemic case study

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Abstract

Teaching the core concepts of Bioethics can be a challenge in Introductory Biology for non-majors laboratory course. Many times, this challenge is due to lab activities raising biologically complex and often unrelatable topics (as in Huntington's Disease or IVF) for the students taking the course. In addition, such topics tends to raise questions of individual freedoms and values which have the potential to evoke very emotional discussions. These emotion-driven discussions related to these topics have been greatly elevated over the past decade due to the changing political climate. Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic humanity has witnessed many bioethical issues including, but not limited to, the disparity in socio-economical access to basic health care. Bioethical questions arose weekly, if not daily in our society. The issue of "Is it okay to skip the COVID-19 vaccine line" was developed into a case study for the Bioethics lab of a Non-Majors General Principles of Biology Laboratory Course. Using an issue that students had heard about in the news made this exercise more relatable to them. This session will introduce the COVID-19 case study and work through it using an ethical decision-making model from the Hastings Center.

Keywords: Bioethics, Biology, Genetics

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