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PRESENTATION

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Bioethics, which emerged at the end of the 1960s, is, in the words of Berlinguer, "a philosophical discipline that connects science, life and morality." Mário Segre said that "Bioethics is the part of ethics, a branch of philosophy, that deals with the issues pertaining to human life (and, therefore, to health). Because bioethics has life as its object of study, it also deals with death (inherent to life)."

The four bioethical principles, defined in 1979 by Beauchamp and Childress, are the following: beneficence, no harm, autonomy, and justice.

In everyday clinical practice we are faced with numerous ethical dilemmas, namely the relationship of the physician with the patients and their families, with the doctor-family relationship being more present in pediatrics than in any other medical specialty. In fact, the breakdown of the doctor-patient relationship is the main cause of lawsuits against doctors.

Also worth mentioning are situations in which Bioethics and its principles play an important role are the introduction of new technologies, the patient's autonomy, and the role of the physician when faced with terminal illness.

The current Brazilian Code of Medical Ethics, established by Federal Council of Medicine Resolution number 1.931/09 and coming into force on April 13, 2010, reveals a greater concern with bioethical principles (already present in the previous Code), especially with patients' autonomy, including that of pediatric patients. In addition, our professional code has included the patient's right to orthothanasia, which was a major advance in our legislation.

The Brazilian Society of Pediatrics and all its affiliates have always sought to offer quality continuing medical education to Brazilian pediatricians, and we hope that this supplement encourages our resident colleagues to have a greater interest in Bioethics and its conflicts.

We thank our renowned colleagues who prepared the articles, all addressing issues that affect our everyday practice, and I thank the editors of *Residência Pediátrica* for the honor of being invited to coordinate this supplement.

I hope everyone takes benefit from reading the supplement and enjoys it as much as we did in its preparation.

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