



The Hans Joachim Schwager Award – Laudation

Munich-Grosshadern, March 15th, 2013

Ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends

As the president of the Jury, I am delighted to open **The Award Ceremony**. Tonight, we will celebrate the first Hans Joachim Schwager Award for Clinical Ethics.

We remember **the late Prof. Hans Joachim Schwager** (see **Laudation**). I first met Hans on the occasion of a Symposium on Clinical Ethics I organized in 1998 with the help of the ‘Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur zu Mainz’ (Academy of Sciences and Literature) where we exchanged concepts and did live demonstrations on ethics consultation for the first time. Already by then, he had the reputation of being a pioneer of supporting Clinical Ethics Support.

The idea for the Hans Joachim Schwager arose in the context of the ICCEC 2005, Basel, when it became visible that the international conference series – his idea – developed successfully attracting a large audience and stimulating offers from centers all over the world to host the meetings. However, it turned out to be a challenge to find a sponsor for an *Award* in the new field of *Clinical Ethics*, especially if the award was to be an *international* one.

We are grateful and proud about the donation of the ‘[Bodelschwingschen Stiftungen Bethel](#)’, Germany, which enables us to realize the award, and we thank the Executive Board and its chair, *Pastor U. Pohl*, as well as its Vice-Chair, *Pastor B. Wolf*, for their support. Moreover, we appreciate the help of *Dr. Klaus Kobert*, Vice-President of Jury, in obtaining the donation.

By the following Laudation, I will announce and honor the winner. But let me first articulate what it is that we intended to support when we stimulated this award in the context of the *International Conference of Clinical Ethics & Consultation* (ICCEC):

“Applications are welcome from individuals and groups with documented activities of implementation, development or research in clinical ethics. Application should include a written documentation of the activities in the field of clinical ethics *and of challenges during the process*. A description of how obstacles were mastered should complement the application.”

In this first round, we received excellent proposals from many countries – in Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Jury undertook a structured review and reached consensus on the winner.

Now, everybody will be very curious to know who the winner is – and what challenges have been faced.

It is my pleasure to announce the WINNER of the first Hans J. Schwager Award for Clinical Ethics.

The Hans J. Schwager Award for Clinical Ethics 2013 goes to the:

[Children's Bioethics Centre](#), The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne, Parkville Victoria, Australia, represented by:

Dr. Hugo Gold, Clinical Director, Clinical Associate Professor,

who is here, as well as by **Professor Lynn Gillam**, PhD, Academic Director / Clinical Ethicist, who is here as well, and by **Dr. Catherine Lees**, PhD, Business Director, holding the fort back home.

The award goes to a young institution. *The Clinical Ethics Committee* at The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne was established in **2004** in response to a controversial case that had received considerable media attention.

Today, the Children's Bioethics Centre is Australia's first and only institution of this kind acting as a national player and providing numerous services to pediatrics.

In the proposal we read about the driving forces, achievements, but also challenges they faced.

"When first established, the clinical ethics committee (...) quickly identified that it was not meeting the needs of clinicians with urgent ethics referrals. To respond to this need, the committee set up the *Clinical Ethics Response Group* (CERG) to respond within 24-48 hours to any case, and the CEC took on a role of ensuring quality and consistent responses and policy development."

This task counts as challenge number 4 in their list of 7 that they feel to have mastered. More challenges concerned

- 5.) training their committee members,
- 6.) ensuring an academically rigorous approach to clinical ethics, and
- 7.) explaining the work so that it is understood by the public.

With all these tasks fulfilled, what challenges to the Centre remain open?

The application mentions two of them:

1. how to function as a national resource for pediatric clinical ethics committees in Australia, and,

2. how to provide clinical ethics services in the outpatient setting, including rural areas, involved in care for patients before and after their hospital stay.

We will be eager to observe how you will master also these ones.

By honoring your Centre with the Hans Joachim Schwager Award, on behalf of the Jury, I invite you, Dr. Hugo Gold, and your colleagues of the Centre to celebrate this success with us – the ICCEC-audience. Maintain your enthusiasm and courage, and, please, continue supporting others on their way of building and developing Clinical Ethics Support.

Moreover, giving the award to the Children's Bioethics Centre, also means to strengthen all those who are dedicated to *pediatric clinical ethics* and to encourage them to further develop their pioneer work for the young patients and their families.

Prof. Dr. Stella Reiter-Theil, Dipl.-Psych.

President of Jury, Co-Director, International Conferences on Clinical Ethics and Consultation