

An Indian-Australian research partnership

**Project Title:**

**Project Number**

**Monash Main Supervisor**

(Name, Email Id, Phone)

Bebe Loff, [bebe.loff@monash.edu](mailto:bebe.loff@monash.edu),

*Full name, Email*

**Monash Co-supervisor(s)**

(Name, Email Id, Phone)

**Monash Department:**

School of Public Health and Preventive Medicine

**IITB Main Supervisor**

(Name, Email Id, Phone)

Rama Pal, [ramapal@iitb.ac.in](mailto:ramapal@iitb.ac.in),

*Full name, Email*

**IITB Co-supervisor(s)**

(Name, Email Id, Phone)

**IITB Head of Dept**

(Name, Email, Phone)

Prof. D. Parthasarathy,  
[dp@hss.iitb.ac.in](mailto:dp@hss.iitb.ac.in),

*Full name, email*

**IITB Department:**

---

## Research Academy Themes:

**Highlight which of the Academy's Theme(s) this project will address?**

*(Feel free to nominate more than one. For more information, see [www.iitbmonash.org](http://www.iitbmonash.org))*

7. Humanities and Social Sciences

---

## The research problem

This problem arose out of a discussion at a workshop at the last National Bioethics Conference in India. It is proposed that apparently "universally applicable" principles of bioethics fail to address the challenges that are faced by health care providers in resource poor health settings when treating low and middle-income patients. For example, Clause 2.3 of the Code of Ethics Regulations (2002) promulgated by the Medical Council of India states

[The physician] should ensure himself that the patient, his relatives or his responsible friends have such knowledge of the patient's condition as will serve the best interests of the patient and the family.

A requirement of this type is not found in Australia, the US or Europe.

It is suggested that generally accepted principles of bioethics fail to take account of the vital role played by the family and the impact of treatment costs on the family. Instead intervention by the family is consistently interpreted as unethical coercion of the patient to act against their autonomous wishes. The focus is the doctor patient (family) interaction as it takes place in public and private hospitals, what leads to it and how decision-making processes differ from those contemplated by normative medical ethics.

## Project aims

*Define the aims of the project*

- To identify the economic, social and cultural factors that influence family/individual's access to and experience of health care.
- To examine the ethical challenges faced by health care providers and whether these challenges are addressed by existing ethical principles.
- If ethical principles are found to be lacking, to suggest a way forward.

## Expected outcomes

*Highlight the expected outcomes of the project*

The project should produce a more globally inclusive bioethics that begins to respond to some of the challenges faced by health care providers who work in resource poor settings with low and middle-income patients.

## How will the project address the Goals of the above Themes?

*Describe how the project will address the goals of one or more of the 6 Themes listed above.*

The project addresses the 7th theme in the program: Humanities and Social Sciences.

Health care providers in India who wish to practice in an ethical manner are poorly supported by normative medical ethics. The content of medical ethics today has its roots in countries and economies that bear little similarity to India. The project seeks to contribute to discussion that creates both a more globally inclusive bioethics and provides some much needed ethical guidance in response to the challenges faced by Indian health care providers.

## Capabilities and Degrees Required

*List the ideal set of capabilities that a student should have for this project. Feel free to be as specific or as general as you like. These capabilities will be input into the online application form and students who opt for this project will be required to show that they can demonstrate these capabilities.*

- Masters degree in a social science or ethics fulfilling other requirements for selection for IITB's PhD programme
- Good knowledge of and demonstrated interest in systemic issues in the Indian health system
- Ability to conduct empirical research

*Desirable*

- Knowledge of medical ethics
- Knowledge of health economics

## Potential Collaborators

*Please visit the IITB website [www.iitb.ac.in](http://www.iitb.ac.in) OR Monash Website [www.monash.edu](http://www.monash.edu) to highlight some potential collaborators that would be best suited for the area of research you are intending to float.*

Please provide a few key words relating to this project to make it easier for the students to apply.

Health care, medical ethics, health economics