

Medical Ethics and Humanities in Utah

Fall 2020

"Emerging Ethical Issues in Psychedelic Research" with Benjamin R. Lewis, MD

By Brent Kious, MD, PhD



Ben Lewis, MD

Psychedelic substances such as psilocybin, LSD, MDMA, ayahuasca, and others are increasingly the subject of clinical research for a number of psychiatric conditions, including major depressive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and various substance use disorders. In his June 11, 2020 **Evening Ethics** presentation, **Dr. Benjamin Lewis** (Department of Psychiatry, University of Utah) provided an introduction to the science of psychedelic research and the ethical issues arising from it. Dr. Lewis first reviewed some of the results of preliminary clinical research utilizing psychedelics, which provides the tantalizing suggestion that psychedelics may be helpful in the treatment of conditions that are not otherwise easily remedied. He then considered the hypothesized mechanisms of action of these drugs and their impact on depression and related disorders, which may involve disruptions in the activity of the default mode network, a collection of brain circuits that are hyperactive in some psychiatric conditions, where this activity is often associated with rumination and negative self-directed thought. Intriguingly, he noted, therapeutic response in many clinical trials, across a variety of psychiatric conditions and psychedelic substances, has been associated with the occurrence of transformative, quasi-spiritual experiences in which subjects report a sense of dissolution of the self or a sense of connection with others or the world.

As Dr. Lewis discussed, the use of psychedelics for the treatment of psychiatric conditions raises a number of ethical issues. Some of these issues are similar to concerns arising within other types of research in psychiatry and medicine more generally: how can we ensure that participants in these trials are able to provide consent, and how do we ensure diverse representation of many groups? Likewise, there are ethical issues pertaining to clinical access that will become pressing if sufficient evidence of the effectiveness of psychedelics for one or more psychiatric conditions is obtained. Since psychedelics are generic drugs, unlikely to be covered by insurance, and highly controlled, it is relatively unlikely that they will be available to all of the people who could conceivably benefit from them, and that they will at least initially be accessible only to persons with sufficient means to pay for them out of pocket. Finally, although it was noted that there is little evidence that psychedelics cause physical dependence, Dr. Lewis contended that it will be important to develop robust screening protocols to ensure that the clinical use of psychedelics is not simply promoting substance abuse. Likewise, since psychedelics may well increase the risk of psychosis in persons who are vulnerable to it, clinical protocols should incorporate techniques for identifying those persons early to minimize the risk that they will be harmed inadvertently.



Inside This Issue

Ethics of Psychedelic Research	1-3
Evening Ethics	2-3
Physicians Literature & Medicine	4
Brent Kious Upcoming Speakers	5
Calendar & Events	5
Program Member Updates	6,3

Continued on Page 3

Evening Ethics Discussions



These informal, multidisciplinary discussions about current issues in medical ethics take place approximately bi-monthly or as ethical issues arise. A PMEH member facilitates discussion. Guided by the topic, we invite people with relevant expertise and experience and informed opinions to join us. Generally about 15-40 people from a variety of disciplines, including healthcare, public policy, philosophy, law, and business attend. We distribute short, timely articles from the nation's most thoughtful newspapers, journals, and magazines to the group in advance of our discussions. CME is offered.



"Race, Research, and the Coronavirus"

Facilitated by
Erin Rothwell, PhD
& Leslie Francis, PhD, JD

Tuesday, August 4, 2020

5:30pm-7pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/92364082996>

Password: 437459

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently published data demonstrating that Black Americans have been hospitalized with COVID-19 at higher rates than other racial and ethnic groups. Further, data also identified that Black Americans are dying at rates higher than their proportion of the population. Some of the nation's leading experts in equity, research and healthcare identified pre-pandemic inequities as implicated in this disproportionate burden on Black Americans during the pandemic. Recent protests in response to George Floyd's death further identified structural bias and discrimination. As our institution moves forward with equity, diversity and inclusivity research initiatives, discussion within our institutional community is needed to ensure we identify the ethical, legal and social complexities highlighted through this pandemic and the type of research needed to address these inequities associated with race in our community. This discussion will consider inequities and how to address them in both COVID-19 and other research at the University of Utah.

Background Readings:

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/05/us/coronavirus-latinos-african-americans-cdc-data.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6928e1.htm>



"The Case for Universal Health Care"

with
David Colton, PhD, MPA,
MEd

**Wednesday,
September 23, 2020**

5:30pm-7pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/98510800650>

Password: 510017

Except for the United States, all developed nations provide their citizens with quality, affordable health care. Even with Medicare, Medicaid, SCHIP, and the Affordable Care Act, nearly 25 million Americans do not have health insurance. Millions that do can only afford high deductible plans, which may prevent them from accessing all but emergency care.

The U.S. is divided on political, fiscal, and religious grounds, particularly in regard to the role of the social contract in governance. Conservatives believe that health care should be an individual responsibility with costs managed through the free market and little or no government. Liberals believe that assuring health care is a shared responsibility, though the government guarantees all have access. Because of this polarization, there has been limited effort to discuss health care from the perspective of our values and expectations as a society.

Background Reading: *The Case for Universal Health Care*, chapter 11: The Ethical & Moral Case for Universal Health Care (contact linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu for pdf)

Optional additional readings: [Liberal and Conservative Representation of the Good Society: A \(Social\) Structural Topic Modeling Approach](#). Sterling, Joanna, Jost, John, and Hardin, Curtis. Sage Open Publications, April-June 2019, 1-13.

[When It Comes to Universal Health Care, What Would Jesus Do?](#) December 19, 2019



This Evening Ethics is a collaboration with Utah Humanities.

We jointly welcome author, David Colton, to lead this Evening Ethics Discussion and to the Book Festival Event on Friday 9/25/2020 at 5:30 PM. Click [here](#) to sign up for the Book Festival Event.

"Solving the Opioid Crisis isn't just a Public Health Challenge—It's a Bioethics Challenge"

with Travis N. Rieder, PhD

Thursday, October 8, 2020

5:30pm-7pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://utah.zoom.us/j/94223504451>

Password: 789209

This Evening Ethics is a collaboration with Utah Humanities

If you have learned about America's opioid crisis primarily from the media or politicians, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the problem is a rather simple one. We must stop excess prescribing of opioids and prevent heroin from coming in over the southern border or fentanyl from coming through the US Postal Service from China. The problem is not simple, however. This laser-like focus on drug supply is an outdated War on Drugs approach to fighting addiction and overdose, and it simply doesn't work. Indeed, it often makes things worse. For this reason, I argue that it takes genuine effort to determine what we should do in response to America's drug problem. That is: we need to do ethics. Solving America's opioid crisis is not a problem just for public health, or for medicine; it's a problem for ethics and policy. And on my view, in order to determine what we should do, we need to better understand the nature of drugs and addiction. The goal of this discussion is to touch on all of these topics.

Background Readings:

"What Chronic Pain Patients are Deeply Afraid Of," in the *NYTimes*, [here](#).

"Solving the Opioid Crisis isn't just a Public Health Challenge—It's a Bioethics Challenge," forthcoming from the Hastings Center Report

Recommended Reading for those Interested in Dr. Rieder's broader story and view:

In Pain: A Bioethicist's Personal Struggle with Opioids

Continued from Page 1—Ethical Issues in Psychedelic Research with Ben Lewis, MD

Another ethical concern that arises specifically with respect to the clinical use of psychedelics is that, if they achieve a therapeutic effect primarily by instilling a sense of spiritual connectedness or meaning, and if that set of transcendent or transformative experiences lends itself to acquiring beliefs that might not be well-supported otherwise, it would seem that there is epistemic risk in using psychedelics in clinical settings: therapeutic progress might come at the cost of coming to believe things that are, or are likely to be, false.

Dr. Lewis examined several reasons to take this concern seriously, as well as several possible ways of defusing it. The ensuing discussion, including the audience members, problematized the worry about epistemic risk, noting that similar concerns might arise with respect to the use of more conventional psychotropic agents or even psychotherapy. Likewise, it was suggested that, for persons suffering severely from different psychiatric conditions, the chance of symptomatic improvement might outweigh the possibility of coming to believe things one otherwise would not, at least as long as the impact of those new beliefs on one's behavior was relatively innocuous.

Continued from Page 6—Program Members on the Road and In Print

COVID-19 publications with Tim Farrell, et.al. include: Farrell, Timothy W., Lauren E. Ferrante, **Teneille Brown**, **Leslie Francis**, Eric Widera, Ramona Rhodes, Tony Rosen, Ula Hwang, Leah J. Witt, Niranjana Thothala, Shan W. Liu, Caroline A. Vitale, Ursula K. Braun, Caroline Stephens, and Debra Saliba. 2020. [AGS Position Statement: Resource Allocation Strategies and Age-Related Considerations in the COVID-19 Era and Beyond](#). *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 68(6): 1136-1142. E-pub ahead of print May 6.

Farrell, Timothy W., **Leslie Francis**, **Teneille Brown**, Lauren E. Ferrante, Eric Widera, Ramona Rhodes, Tony Rosen, Ula Hwang, Leah J. Witt, Niranjana Thothala, Shan W. Liu, Caroline A. Vitale, Ursula K. Braun, Caroline Stephens, and Debra Saliba. 2020. [Rationing Limited Healthcare Resources in the COVID-19 Era and Beyond: Ethical Considerations Regarding Older Adults](#). *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society* 68(6): 1143-1149. E-pub ahead of print May 6.

Other recently published articles include: Francis, John G., and **Leslie P. Francis**. [Immunization and Participation in Youth Amateur Sports](#). *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, e-pub ahead of print April 15.

Nelson, Ryan H., and **Leslie P. Francis**. 2020. [Intellectual Disability and Justice in a Pandemic](#). *Kennedy Institute of Ethics Journal*, e-pub ahead of print June 18.

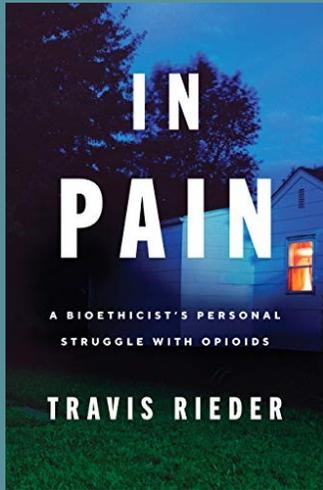
Sam Brown's new book, *Joseph Smith's Translation*, can be purchased [here](#).

Leslie Francis and John Francis' book, *Sustaining Surveillance*, is expected out fall 2020.

The Patient as Victim and Vector: Ethics and Infectious Disease, by **Peggy Baffin**, **Leslie Francis**, **Jay Jacobson** and Charles Smith, will be reissued with a new preface in Fall 2020.

Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group

Schedule of 2020 Readings can be found on our website



Wednesday, August 12, 2020

6:00-7:30pm, Facilitated by Gretchen Case, PhD, MA

zoom: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/92179264769>, Password: 145395

In Pain: A Bioethicist's Personal Struggle with Opioids, by Travis Rieder, PhD

Travis Rieder begins *In Pain* with the motorcycle accident that severely damaged his foot, but the story does not follow a typical recovery narrative. Instead Rieder shares the extraordinary—and yet so increasingly common—path he took to manage his terrible pain with prescribed opioids and then to manage his withdrawal from those same medications. Rieder, a bioethicist, brings keen insight to the historical and structural problems that underlie the problem of opioid use and addiction. He paints a tragically clear picture of what it is like to be a person in pain, who wants to stop using opioids, confronting a medical system that is not prepared to help.



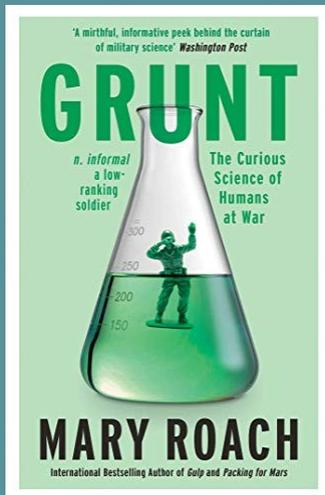
Wednesday, September 9, 2020

6:00-7:30pm, Facilitated by Rachel Borup, PhD

zoom: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/92789793089> Password: 027520

***The Farewell* (film)** directed by Lulu Wang

The Farewell premiered at the 2019 Sundance Film Festival. It tells the story of a Chinese family's decision to hide their grandmother's terminal cancer diagnosis from her, and, instead, stage a wedding as a way to gather all the family members together again for a final "farewell." The film is written and directed by Lulu Wang and is based on her own experiences, which she originally presented on the radio program, *This American Life*. The film raises interesting questions about different cultural attitudes toward death, and manages to be surprisingly funny and touching.



Wednesday, October 14, 2020

6:00-7:30pm, Facilitated by Jenny Cochrane, MA

zoom: <https://utah.zoom.us/j/99328408667> (no password)

Grunt: The Curious Science of Humans at War, by Mary Roach

Everything in the military is engineered to win wars, including the people. With her characteristic wit and humor, *Grunt: The Curious Science of Humans at War*, Mary Roach examines the mental, emotional, and physical toll a human soldier in a warzone endures and how everything from a soldier's haircut, uniform, and even cleaning regimen is designed to ensure victory in battle. *Grunt* covers everything from how the zippers on a soldier's uniform can be a problem for snipers; how war—both simulated and real—affects hearing and, by association, balance and gait; how amputee actors help military medics prepare for the gore and horror of war wounds; and how the food a soldier consumes can mean the difference between staying alert and alive or being lethargic and dead. "Take a tour of duty with Roach, and you'll never see our nation's defenders the same way again!"

Keep the Dates for Upcoming Speakers

Jonathan M. Metzl, MD, PhD, will be our 2020 Cowan Memorial Lecturer, visiting Utah virtually on October 1, 2020. He will present an Internal Medicine Grand Rounds and an Evening Ethics. Watch for more information.



Victoria Sweet, MD, our 2020 Medical Humanities Lecturer, who was planning to visit Utah in November, will **re-schedule her November 2020 visit to Spring 2021** due to COVID-19. She is the award-winning author of *God's Hotel: A Doctor, a Hospital, and a Pilgrimage to the Heart of Medicine* and *Slow Medicine: The Way to Healing*.



Steven Joffe, MD, will be our 2020-21 David Green Memorial Speaker. Originally planning to visit Utah in December, the **new dates** for his Pediatric Grand Rounds and Evening Ethics are **April 28 and 29, 2021**.

Congratulations to Brent Kious, MD, PhD !!!



Brent Kious, MD, PhD has been selected as a Greenwall Foundation Faculty Scholar for the Class of 2023. This prestigious 3 year fellowship which gives him 50% time for bioethics research, began July 1, 2020. Peggy Battin, Leslie Francis, and Jeff Botkin are serving as project mentors. For more information on Brent Kious and his scholar project, **Physician aid-in-dying, suffering, and psychiatry**, see [here](#)

PMEH Calendar of Events

<p>*The Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group 6:00-7:30 pm (via Zoom)</p> <p><i>In Pain: A Bioethicist's Personal Struggle with Opioids</i>, by Travis Rieder, PhD Facilitated by Gretchen Case, PhD, MA; zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/92179264769 Password: 145395</p> <p><i>The Farewell (film)</i>, directed by Lulu Wang, Facilitated by Rachel Borup, PhD; zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/92789793089 Password: 027520</p> <p><i>Grunt: The Curious Science of Humans at War</i>, by Mary Roach, Facilitated by Jenny Cochrane, MA; zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/99328408667 (no password)</p>	<p>Wed. August 12</p> <p>Wed. September 9</p> <p>Wed. October 14</p>
<p>*Evening Ethics</p> <p>"Race, Research, and the Coronavirus," with Erin Rothwell, PhD & Leslie Francis, PhD, JD 5:30pm-7pm, via zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/92364082996 Password: 437459</p> <p>"The Case for Universal Health Care," with David Colton, PhD, MPA, Med, 5:30pm-7pm, via zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/98510800650 Password: 510017 (a collaboration with Utah Humanities)</p> <p>"Solving the Opioid Crisis isn't just a Public Health Challenge—It's a Bioethics Challenge" with Travis N. Rieder, PhD 5:30pm-7pm, via zoom: https://utah.zoom.us/j/94223504451 Password: 789209 (a collaboration with Utah Humanities)</p>	<p>Tues. August 4</p> <p>Wed. September 23</p> <p>Thurs. October 8</p>
<p>Internal Medicine Grand Rounds</p> <p>"Resource Allocation Strategies and Age-Related Considerations in the COVID-19 Era: Legal, Ethical, and Clinical Implications in Utah," with Tim Farrell, MD & Leslie Francis, PhD, JD</p>	<p>Thurs. August 27</p>
<p>Cowan Speakership</p> <p>Jonathan M. Metzel, PhD. Cowan Memorial Speakership watch for details</p>	<p>Thurs. October 1</p>



Disclosure: None of the faculty or planners or anyone in control of content for this continuing medical education activity have any relevant financial relationships to disclose since the content does not cover any products/services of a commercial interest; therefore, there are no relevant financial relationships to disclose. **AMA Credit:** The University of Utah School of Medicine designates this live activity for a maximum of 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. All attendees are encouraged to use the CME system to claim their attendance. Physicians will be awarded AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™; all other professions will be awarded attendance at a CME event credit that they may use for their re-credentialing purposes. All users will be able to print or save certificates. For questions regarding the CME system, please contact the UUCME Office. For questions regarding re-credentialing process or requirements, please contact your re-credentialing organization. **ACCREDITATION:** The University Of Utah School Of Medicine is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) to provide continuing medical education for physicians. **NONDISCRIMINATION AND DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION STATEMENT:** The University of Utah does not exclude, deny benefits to or otherwise discriminate against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, veteran's status, religion, gender identity, gender expression, genetic information, or sexual orientation in admission to or participation in its programs and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request, with reasonable notice. Requests for accommodations or inquiries or complaints about University nondiscrimination and disability/access policies may be directed to the Director, OEO/AA, Title IX/Section 504/ADA Coordinator, 201 S President's Circle, RM 135, Salt Lake City, UT 84112, 801-581-8365 (Voice/TTY), 801-585-5746 (Fax).



PROGRAM IN MEDICAL ETHICS
AND HUMANITIES
75 South 2000 East #108
Salt Lake City, Utah 84112

**PROGRAM IN MEDICAL ETHICS AND
HUMANITIES**

Program Faculty:

Margaret P. Battin, MFA, PhD
Jeffrey R. Botkin, MD, MPH
Samuel M. Brown, MD, MS
Teneille R. Brown, JD
Gretchen A. Case, PhD, MA
Leslie P. Francis, PhD, JD
Brent Kious, MD, PhD
Erin Rothwell, PhD
Jim Ruble, PharmD, JD
Susan Sample, PhD, MFA
Jill Sweney, MD
James Tabery, PhD
Natalia Washington, PhD
Jay Jacobson, MD (Emeritus)

Program Associates:

Rebecca Anderson, RN, PhD
Philip L. Baese, MD
Louis Borgenicht, MD
Maureen Henry, JD, PhD
Howard Mann, MD
Mark Matheson, DPhil
Thomas Schenkenberg, PhD

Academic Program Manager:

Linda Carr-Lee Faix, MA, PhC

Phone: (801) 581-7170
or (801) 587-5884

Program Members on the Road and In Print

Tim Farrell and **Leslie Francis** will be presenting Internal Medicine Grand Rounds on August 27th: "Resource Allocation Strategies and Age-Related Considerations in the COVID-19 Era: Legal, Ethical, and Clinical Implications in Utah." In May, they presented at the [American Geriatrics Society Webinar](https://geriatricscareonline.org/ProductAbstract/resource-allocation-strategies/W017) <https://geriatricscareonline.org/ProductAbstract/resource-allocation-strategies/W017>

Susan Sample published "Remains" in the Poetry & Medicine column of JAMA, August 4, 2020.

Gretchen Case is part of an interprofessional team from Health Sciences at the University of Utah that received a grant from the Josiah Macy Foundation in June 2020. Project ARISE will use experiential learning to address individual and structural biases and explore a process for repairing provider-patient relationships in maternal health care. The team aims to create inclusive interprofessional learning environments, and consequently improve patient care by training faculty, residents, fellows, and trainees, with the input and guidance of community experts.

Peggy Battin was at TEDMED, in Boston, in March; On May 27, 2020, she interviewed for Citizen Sidewalk Café (University of Calgary, Calgary Institute for the Humanities): Watch Layla Lavan Ethics and Morality Salon #4 with Dr. Margaret Battin ["What do we owe the triaged-against" on YouTube](#). On June 20, 2020, Peggy Battin was a zoom panelist presenting at the World Congress of Bioethics

Teneille Brown was interviewed for Wired in June: [No, You Don't Need to See President Trump's Medical Records](#)

Jim Tabery was interviewed for Silicon Slopes Live in June: [COVID-19 Conspiracy Theories](#)

Continued on page 3