

Medical Ethics and Humanities in Utah

Spring 2020

Caring—How can we work together to address drug shortages and drug costs?

Q & A with Erin Fox, PharmD, BCPS, FASHP,
Senior Director, Drug Information and Support Services, UHealth

Erin Fox, Senior Director, Drug Information and Support Services at UHealth, and Program in Medical Ethics and Humanities faculty, Jim Ruble, PharmD, JD, led an Evening Ethics discussion in November 2019 that educated us about some of the ongoing actions to improve drug shortages and high drug prices. Dr. Erin Fox answers some of our questions below:

News stories about drug shortages and drug quality are increasing. What is being done about these important issues?

During 2019, the FDA conducted multiple meetings and listening sessions in an attempt to determine the root causes of drug shortages. Their report was released at the end of December 2019. Overall the report highlights 3 key root causes:

1. Lack of incentives for drug companies to make inexpensive products.
2. No reward for manufacturers who choose to invest in quality – leading to some companies having poor quality resulting in drug shortages.
3. Challenges that make it difficult for companies to enter the market to help with or resolve a shortage, or for companies to make their own recoveries.

Quality problems result not only in drug shortages, but in general concern for patient well-being. A recent new book, *Bottle of Lies*, by Katherine Eban highlights the problem of outsourcing production to areas of the world with different regulatory and quality perspectives. Common medications such as blood pressure and heartburn medications are being recalled due to contamination or general poor quality – leading to shortages and uncertainty.

What is being done about this problem?

Congress is becoming more interested in potential solutions to this problem. Senator Collins recently introduced legislation to aimed at addressing some of the problems that lead to drug shortages.

Meetings and hearings are expected during 2020 that focus on pharmaceutical quality, including the need to consider pharmaceutical availability a component of national security.

Market-based solutions are also being considered. Civica Rx, headquartered in Lehi, UT, is focused on improving access to medications in short supply and providing high quality products. Civica's innovation is providing drug companies with a guaranteed volume for a specific time period, something not available to drug companies with current contracting models.



Erin Fox, PharmD,
BCPS, FASHP



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Evening Ethics Discussions



These informal, multidisciplinary discussions about current issues in medical ethics take place approximately bi-monthly or as ethical issues arise. A PМЕH 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 and light refreshments are offered.



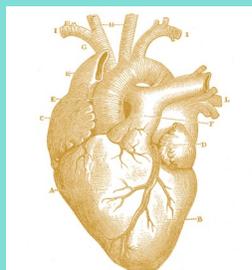
"Asperger, Autism, and Nazi Medicine: Perspectives from a Historian" with Dr. Edith Sheffer

**Tuesday February 4, 2020
5:30pm-7:00pm
Lower Level, Eccles Health Sciences Library**

January 27th is International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The Red Army liberated Auschwitz on that day in 1945, so 2020 marks the 75th anniversary. Each year URemembers brings speakers and events to honor that history. The Program in Medical Ethics and Humanities is happy to collaborate and welcome **Dr. Edith Sheffer**, historian, author and senior fellow at the Institute of European Studies at UC Berkeley, to discuss her historical research on Dr. Hans Asperger and his work with autistic and disabled children in Vienna during the Nazi regime. We invite you to join us and consider the ethical questions raised by the fraught histories of Asperger's ideas and actions. What do we do with medical research connected to Nazi Ideology? How and when does the origin of medical research matter? **The suggested reading for this session is the Introduction and Chapters 6 and 7 of Sheffer's book, *Asperger's Children: The Origins of Autism in Nazi Vienna*.** Contact linda.carrlee@hsc.utah.edu for a pdf of this material.

See [URemembers page](#) for more events in this series.

**This Evening Ethics is a collaboration with URemembers,
The Office of Equity and Diversity,
and the Eccles Health Sciences Library**



HEALTHCARE STORIES OF REPAIR

**Friday, February 7, 2020
7:30pm
Kingsbury Hall
1395 President's Circle, SLC**

"Healthcare: Stories of Repair," the sequel to Fall 2019's "Healthcare: Stories of Rebellion," will examine the idea of repair in all its meanings. What does it mean to be healed? How do we cope with the process of repair? What happens when we try to fix something that isn't broken? This evening of stories, with some storytellers selected from the audience, will bring us together as a community to grapple with complex questions and find comfort in shared experiences.

This is a UtahPresents event that is co-sponsored with the Program in Medical Ethics and Humanities and the University of Utah Health's Resiliency Center.

This Event requires Tickets.





What are some resources where we could read more about these?

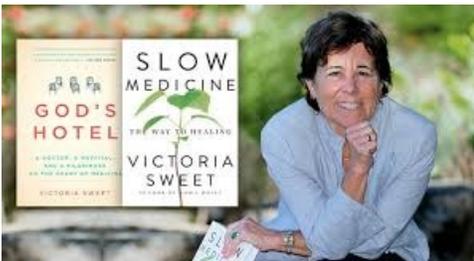
[FDA Report on Root Causes of Drug Shortages](#)

[S. 2723 Mitigating Emergency Drug Shortages Act](#)

[Duke Margolis Center for Health Policy – Public Meeting – Understanding How the Public Perceives and Values Pharmaceutical Quality](#)

[Civica Rx](#)

Medical Humanities Speaker Series: Victoria Sweet, MD



Victoria Sweet, MD, 2020 Medical Humanities Speaker

Victoria Sweet, MD, agreed to work at Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco for two months but stayed twenty years. During that time, she completed master's and doctoral degrees in the history of medicine, which, coupled with her patient care experiences, led her to develop a radical approach to medicine. “[U]nderneath our scientific modern medicine was an earlier way of understanding the body,” she discovered: not corporate “fast medicine” where the body is viewed as a machine and the physician, a technological mechanic, but “slow medicine” where the doctor is more akin to a gardener, “stepping back and seeing the patient in the context of his environment.” This, Sweet argues, is the way to healing.

Victoria Sweet will visit Utah April 15-16 as our 2019-2020 Medical Humanities Lecturer. 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*. She will lead **Evening Ethics Wednesday, April 15: “Slow Medicine, Ethics, and the Case of Mrs. C.”** and deliver an informal lecture on the main University campus **April 16: “Hildegard of Bingen: Medieval lessons for Modern Medicine”** She also will meet with medical students and faculty interested in creative writing.

Dr. Sweet studied Hildegard of Bingen, a twelfth-century German nun and Abbess revered not only for her philosophy, theology, writing, and music, but also for her medical knowledge. What Sweet learned from her, among many things, was the critical significance of the “‘tincture of time’”; “that kind of time-costly caring was what created the personal relationship between patient and doctor. And that relationship was the secret of healing.” Onto Hildegard of Bingen’s concept of the healing power of nature, Sweet grafts respect for modern medicine through engaging stories drawn from her own medical training.

Internal Medicine Grand Rounds: Brent M. Kious, MD, PhD & Margaret P. Battin, PhD, MFA

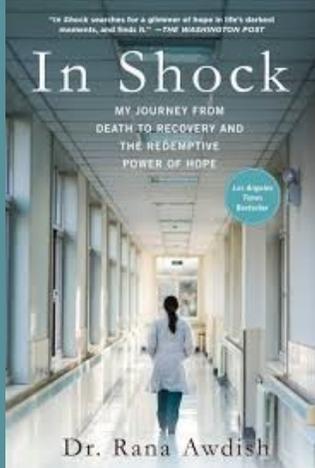
Internal Medicine Grand Rounds: Aid in Dying: Is Somatic Suffering Special?

With PMEH faculty, Brent M. Kious, MD, PhD and Margaret P. Battin, MFA, PhD



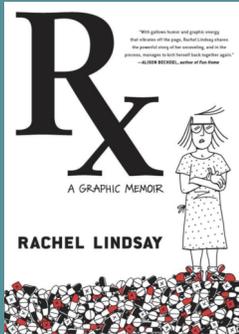
Thursday, February 27, 2020
Noon, Classroom A, SOM





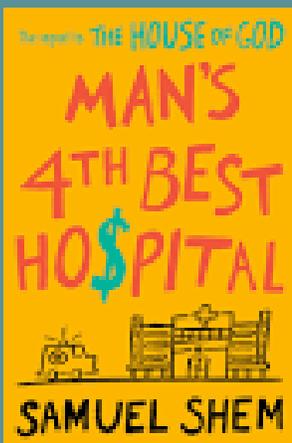
Wednesday, February 12, 2020
 University of Utah Hospital Large Conference Room #W1220
 6:00-8:30pm, Facilitated by Susan Sample, PhD, MFA
In Shock: My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope by Rana Awdish

Seven months into her first pregnancy, Rana Awdish checked into the emergency department of the Detroit hospital where she was completing her training as a critical care physician. She would lose not only the pregnancy and most of her blood volume; she would suffer septic shock, a stroke, liver tumors, miscarriage, and multiple surgeries over the ensuing months. As she transformed from physician to patient, Dr. Awdish also experienced indifference and disregard from her doctors, which she attributes to medical education: "I knew we valued the cure, the goal, the win. We were far less comfortable in the gray, shadowed area of suffering." Too often, doctors are bound to the disease, rather than the patient; they emotionally detach from patients. To do otherwise is to risk losing control, and, as she notes, "risk carries with it an inherent degree of vulnerability." Yet, it is precisely through exploring vulnerability—"a dark hole at the center of a flurry of what was otherwise highly proficient, astounding skillful care"—that physicians will connect to patients and colleagues. As Awdish notes, "I didn't understand that open channels would replenish my supply of self. That there was reciprocity in empathy." As you read Awdish's memoir, note her comments on word choice as she repeatedly draws attention to the necessity of a shared language between doctors and patients. Do you agree? From a patient's point of view, do you find her suggestions for improving medical training insightful or not?



Wednesday, March 11, 2020
 University of Utah Hospital Large Conference Room #W1220
 6:00-8:30pm, Facilitated by Gretchen Case, PhD, MA
Rx: A Graphic Memoir by Rachel Lindsay

Rx: A Graphic Memoir is cartoonist Rachel Lindsay's first book, telling her compelling personal story of how working on marketing campaigns for antidepressant medication, in order to have health insurance coverage for her own bipolar disorder, contributed to her declining health and hospitalization. Rx addresses intimate, personal issues of illness as well as broader, public issues of the US health care system.



Wednesday, April 8, 2020
 University of Utah Hospital Large Conference Room #W1220
 6:00-8:30pm, Facilitated by Susan Sample, PhD, MFA.
Man's 4th Best Hospital by Samuel Shem

Fast forward forty years: Roy Basch, M.D., and colleagues who suffered through their internship years in the 1970s at the hospital known as House of God are recruited to work at a new "Future of Medicine Clinic: Care, Compassion, and Cancer." It is part of a fictional academic medical center known as Man's Best Hospital—until it dropped to number four in national rankings. The reasons? Electronic medical records, hospital mergers, corporate medicine, and insurance companies: villains Basch and his friends battle in this comic sequel to Shem's *The House of God*. The 1978 novel, a cynical view of medical training that "scandalized prominent reviewers within the health care community," continues to be a favorite. Shem—a psychiatrist whose real name is Stephen Bergman—said he wrote his new novel "to resist injustice, and the danger of isolation, and the healing power of good connection." One of the questions we will discuss is whether the book or novels in general can fulfill that intention. Please note: you do not have to read Shem's original novel; the sequel should stand on its own merit.

Schedule of 2020 Readings can be found on [our website](#)

Photos from 2019 David Green Memorial Speakership



David Green Memorial Speaker,
Armand H. Matheny Antommara, MD, PhD, FAAP,
 with **PMEH Chief, Gretchen Case, PhD, MA,**
 by photo of
David Green, MD.



And at Evening Ethics Discussion.

PMEH Calendar of Events

<p>*The Physicians Literature and Medicine Discussion Group 6:00-8:00 pm U of U Hospital Large Conference Room #W1220</p> <p><i>In Shock: My Journey from Death to Recovery and the Redemptive Power of Hope</i> by Rana Awdish Facilitated by Susan Sample, PhD, MFA</p> <p><i>RX: A Graphic Novel</i> by Rachel Lindsay Facilitated by Gretchen Case, PhD, MA</p> <p><i>Man's 4th Best Hospital</i> by Samuel Shem Facilitated by Susan Sample, PhD, MFA</p>	<p>Wed. Feb. 12</p> <p>Wed. Mar. 11</p> <p>Wed. Apr. 8</p>
<p>Resident Ethics Conferences 12:30-1:15 pm</p> <p><i>Impaired Health Professionals: What to do when colleagues need help</i> VAMC: 2nd floor Tsagaris Rm: Leslie Francis, PhD, JD & Megan Call, PhD UUHosp 4th floor SOM, Cartwright Rm: Leslie Francis, PhD, JD & Megan Call, PhD</p> <p><i>How to disclose bad news</i> UUHosp 4th floor SOM, Cartwright Rm: Gretchen Case, PhD, MA & Paige Patterson, MD VAMC: 2nd floor Tsagaris Rm: Gretchen Case, PhD, MA & Paige Patterson, MD</p>	<p>Tues. Feb. 4</p> <p>Tues. Feb. 18</p> <p>Tues. April 21</p> <p>Tues. April 28</p>
<p>*Evening Ethics</p> <p><i>"Asperger, Autism, and Nazi Medicine"</i> with Dr. Edith Sheffer, 5:30pm-7pm, EHSL, Lower Level</p> <p><i>UtahPresents: Healthcare: Stories of Repair</i>, 7:30 pm, Kingsbury Hall</p> <p><i>"Slow Medicine, Ethics, and the Case of Mrs. C."</i> with Victoria Sweet, MD, 5:30pm-7pm, location TBD</p>	<p>Tues. Feb. 4</p> <p>Fri. Feb. 7</p> <p>Wed. April 15</p>
<p>Lectures</p> <p><i>Internal Medicine Grand Rounds: Aid in Dying: Is Somatic Suffering Special?</i> with Brent Kious MD, PhD & Margaret P Battin, MFA, PhD, noon, Classroom A</p> <p><i>"Hildegard of Bingen: Medieval lessons for Modern Medicine"</i> talk by Victoria Sweet , time & location TBD</p>	<p>Thurs. Feb. 27</p> <p>Thurs. Apr. 16</p>



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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, PhD

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

Program Members on the Road and In Print

Gretchen Case won the School of Medicine's Core Educator Award for Scholarship for furthering the core educator mission and reputation through publications and presentations at the regional or national level. **Gretchen Case** also has two new publications, both related to research in medical education:

- Chow CJ, Case GA, Matias CE. Tools for discussing identity and privilege among medical students, trainees, and faculty. MedEdPORTAL. 2019;15:10864.
- Case GA, Cheek-O'Donnell, S (2020). Using Theatre to Improve Patient Handoffs. In Crawford P (Ed.), Health Humanities Companion.

Peggy Battin will attend the "National Clinicians Conference on Medical Aid in Dying" in Berkeley, February 14-15, 2020, the TEDMED conference in Boston March 2-3, the Hastings Center workgroup on dementia, part 2, in New York City, March 30-31, and the Conference on World Affairs, in Boulder, April 8-11.

Susan Sample is featured in the Wall Street Journal article, [The Healing Power of Poetry](#). **Susan Sample** also co-directed, with **Gretchen Case**, a narrative medicine workshop for genetic counseling graduate students Nov. 14 at the U of U School of Medicine, and also co-facilitated a visual art-creative writing project for patients and their families November 20 at the annual Patient Advocacy Meeting, sponsored by the Pancreas Cancer Research Program at Huntsman Cancer Institute.