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at the IRCM

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# BRAINSTORM

A newsletter about ethics, neuroscience, and society  
Un bulletin sur l'éthique, les neurosciences et la société

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Brainstorm

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## Profile | Profil



**Kenneth A Richman, PhD**, earned his doctorate in philosophy at Rutgers University. He is currently Professor of Philosophy at MCPHS University (formerly the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences). His first research area was early modern philosophy, with a focus on David Hume's account of belief. Pursuing Hume's claim that "skepticism is a malady" led him to examine concepts of health and disease. Exploration of these concepts with neurologist Andrew Budson ultimately yielded Ken's book [Ethics and the Metaphysics of Medicine](#) (MIT Press 2004), along with several related papers. Ken has been collaborating with social scientists for over 10 years to explore ethical challenges that arise in the practice of community-based research. Research ethics has also been a practice area for him. He serves as Chair of the MCPHS Institutional Review Board for protection of human subjects

of research, and speaks to professional organizations in the cosmetics industry on ethics and product development. Ken's interest in neuroethics began when he noticed the ways that school curricula for autistic children strongly encourage behavior that conforms to social expectations. He is currently working on neurodiversity and moral responsibility, looking at the ethical, legal, and social implications of cognitive models of autism. Autism and moral responsibility will be the topic of his talks to the Montreal Neuroethics Network on 5 May and 9 June 2016.

**Statement on Neuroethics:** Neuroethics provides a new perspective on some of the most traditional questions of philosophy: What is the self? What are the limits of personal identity? Under what conditions am I responsible for what happens? I hope that neuroethics will help us understand and respect difference while taking a responsible approach to identifying and treating neurological pathologies.

### Sample publications:

- Richman, KA. (2015) [Autism, the Social Thinking Curriculum, and Moral Courage](#). [Power and Education](#), 7(3), pp. 355-360.
- Richman, KA., Leslie B. Alexander and Gala True. (2015) "[How do Front-line Research Workers Think about 'Ethics on the Ground' When Working with Marginalized Target Populations?](#)" [AJOB: Empirical Bioethics](#), 6(2), 2015, pp. 1-11.
- Richman, KA. (In press) "Drug-Centered Care, Disease Mongering and Quality of Life." In Ho, D, ed. [Philosophical Issues in Pharmaceuticals: Development, Dispensing, and Usage](#). Dordrecht: Springer, in press.

If you would like to post any events, announcements, or news of interest please contact us at [neuroethics@ircm.qc.ca](mailto:neuroethics@ircm.qc.ca) (subject line: Brainstorm Events and Announcements)



## Announcements | Annonces

**Call for Abstracts:** International Neuroethics Society Annual Meeting, November 10-11, 2016, San Diego, USA

**Submission Deadline:** June 1, 2016, [click here for more info.](#)

**Call for Neuroethics Essays:** International Neuroethics Society Student/Postdoc Essay Contest

**Submission Deadline:** June 15, 2016, [click here for more info.](#)

**Call for Applicants:** Visiting Scholar in Neuroethics 2016-2017 with the Neuroethics Research Unit in Montréal, Canada

**Submission Deadline:** June 15, 2016, [click here for more info.](#)

**Call for Papers:** Diametros—An Online Journal of Philosophy Special Issue: Equality and Decency in Healthcare

**Submission Deadline:** December 15, 2016, [click here for more info.](#)

## Events | Événements

**Montreal Neuroethics Network Seminar:** Kenneth Richman, PhD — “Cognitive Models of Autism and their Implications for Moral Responsibility”

**Date:** May 5, 2016, 12-1pm, IRCM, Montreal, [click here for more info.](#)

**The University of Gothenburg and the Gothenburg Responsibility Project — Workshop on Agency and Responsibility**

**Date:** May 5-6, 2016, Gothenburg, Sweden, [click here for more info.](#)

**Symposium: Sleep, Consciousness, and Lucid Dreaming**

**Date:** May 14, 2016, Austin, TX, [click here for more info.](#)

**Conference: Ethics and the Brain**

**Date:** May 20-21, 2016

**Location:** Insight Institute or Neurosurgery and Neuroscience, Flint, Michigan, [click here for more info.](#)

**Conference — Care in Practice: On the Philosophy and Implementation of Care Ethics**

**Date:** June 1-2, 2016

**Location:** Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield, UK, [click here for more info.](#)

# International Neuroethics Forum

## International Vulnerability: The Children Among Us

Sharmin Hossain, PhD

Judy Illes, PhD

National Core for Neuroethics – University of British Columbia

*We write this column on March 24, 2016 in the wake of the day that Brussels experienced immense suffering perpetrated by murder and terror. In its airport and metro station, travelers were killed, maimed, wounded and traumatized, and on that day, innocent children lost their parents. Our hearts go out to them. Cultural hatred, fear of diversity, and racial fervor bring about the scourge of terrorism to this treacherous new world landscape. We all suffer, but children may well suffer the most – given that they deal with the potential lifelong impact of violence.*

The unjust and heart-wrenching plight of these children brings a sharp reminder of another group of suffering children – newly homeless and stigmatized refugees. Canada, to its credit, committed to receiving [25,000 Syrian refugees](#) by February 2016, and [a further 10,000](#) by year end. One pressing issue above and beyond concerns for refugee well-being is how children with disabilities and additional challenges will be supported in their transition. Citizenship and Immigration Canada recently [reported](#) a frequency of about 1% of “cognitive, behavioural and nervous system disorders” among a cohort of Syrian refugees resettled in Canada. This estimate includes behavioural disorders, infantile autism, intellectual disabilities, and nervous system disorders.

Those refugees with neurodevelopmental disorders such as autism, cerebral palsy, and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder can face a particularly tough time, especially when considering the experiences of non-refugee children who have them. These disorders have been studied for decades, yet knowledge about them remains limited. Basic science and human research goes on. Still we are learning new things every day. Our knowledge in this context is especially limited when we try to pair the Western medical lens of biomedical research with different cultural appreciations of these disorders. When layering onto this challenge the needs of children with brain disorders who are moved from one country to another, becoming refugees from their homeland, and strangers to their new one, the complexity is immense and our knowledge is nearly zero.

In refugee children, neurodevelopmental disorders may be comorbid with other health issues, such as those related to malnutrition, psychiatric illnesses, or prolonged deprivation of necessary medicines for existing conditions. Notably, the IRCC report also highlights the potential for under diagnosis since these health screenings rely heavily on self-reporting rather than systematic assessments for a number of disorders. Post-traumatic stress disorder, normally attributed to adults, remains a key concern.

# International Neuroethics Forum

Providing appropriate treatment for these children is both an ethical and an economic concern for Canada. Since it is a little too late for anticipatory ethics strategies, we need responsive ones that will specifically take into consideration the effects of cultural barriers, such as the stigmatization faced by many refugees, cultural perception of mental health, challenges in communication, and prior healthcare context, such as those provided at the refugee camps or previous host country.

At present, we are pursuing answers to questions such as:

1. What current strategies do Canadian refugee intake services use to screen and provide outreach to children with neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families?
2. What are the specific challenges related to the intake and care of refugee children with neurodevelopmental disorders at various nodes of care in the Canadian health care system?
3. Are strategies optimized to respond to and respect the nosology of disease and culture of the country of origin, age of child, and family values and priorities?

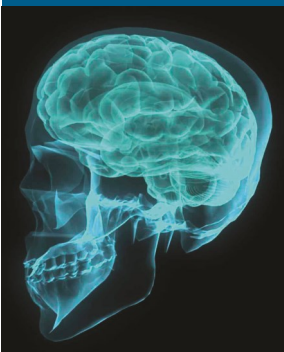
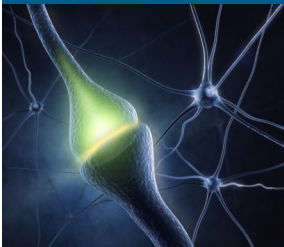
The answers to these questions may lead to better understandings of people and youth with different values, perspectives, and priorities – especially the most vulnerable among us, like refugee children with neurodevelopmental disorders. If we use neuroethics thinking to improve the life of even one such child and their family, provide an opportunity that did not exist before, or prevent one instance of discrimination, it will have been worth the effort.

Giants steps, or one at a time. Each one will count.

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*Judy Illes is a Professor of Neurology at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada Research Chair in Neuroethics, and President and Chairman of the Board of the [International Neuroethics Society](#). She is a Fellow of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (2011), the Royal Society of Canada (2012), and the American Academy for the Advancement of Science (2012). Her research focuses on ethical, legal, social and policy challenges at the intersection of neuroscience and biomedical ethics.*

*Sharmin Hossain is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the [National Core for Neuroethics](#) at the University of British Columbia (UBC). She holds a Neuroscience Ph.D. from UBC and considers herself a neuroscientist-turned-neuroethicist and an early career scholar in neuroethics. Her research focuses on ethical challenges in health research involving children with neurodevelopmental disorders.*



## Literature | Littérature

### ARTICLES

[Beliefs about dangerousness of people with mental health problems: The role of media reports and personal exposure to threat or harm.](#) Reavley NJ, Jorm AF, Morgan AJ. Soc Psychiatry Psychiatr Epidemiol. 2016 Apr 5. [Epub ahead of print].

[Are individuals living with mental illness and their preferred alternative decision-makers attuned and aligned in their attitudes regarding treatment decisions?](#)

Roberts LW, Kim JP. J Psychiatr Res. 2016 Mar 15; 78: 42-47. [Epub ahead of print].

[Sex differences in cognition: Does the “fairer sex” need a fairer test?](#)

Sano M, Gandy S. Neurology. 2016 Apr 12; 86(15): 1364-5. [Epub ahead of print].

[Training Psychiatrists for Global Mental Health: Cultural Psychiatry, Collaborative Inquiry, and Ethics of Alterity.](#) Griffith JL, Kohrt B, Dyer A, Polatin P, Morse M, Jabr S, Abdeen S, Gaby LM, Jindal A, Khin EK. Acad Psychiatry. 2016 Apr 8. [Epub ahead of print].

[When does a human being die?](#)

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[Attitudes Toward Treating Addiction with Deep Brain Stimulation.](#)

Ali R, DiFrancesco MF, Ho AL, Kampman KM, Caplan AL, Halpern CH. Brain Stimul. 2016 Mar 15.

[Ethical Considerations of Broadcasting Awake Brain Stimulation Surgery: Reigniting a Debate.](#)

Rossi PJ, Giordano J, Walter BL, Okun MS. Brain Stimul. 2016 Mar 21. [Epub ahead of print].

[A qualitative study on the ethics of transforming care: examining the development and implementation of Canada's first mental health strategy.](#)

Park MM, Lencucha R, Mattingly C, Zafran H, Kirmayer LJ. Implement Sci. 2015 Aug 19; 10: 121.

[Why do children decide not to participate in clinical research: a quantitative and qualitative study.](#)

Hein IM, Troost PW, de Vries MC, Knibbe CA, van Goudoever JB, Lindauer RJ. Pediatr Res. 2015 Jul; 78(1): 103-8. Epub 2015 Apr 9.

[Faith, ethics and Section 63 of the Mental Health Act 1983.](#)

Curtice M, James L. BJPsych Bull. 2016 Apr; 40(2): 77-81.

[Ethical issues in using Twitter for population-level depression monitoring: a qualitative study.](#)

Mikal J, Hurst S, Conway M. BMC Med Ethics. 2016 Apr 14; 17(1): 22.

[The Perspectives of Islamic Jurists on the Brain Death as Legal Death in Islam.](#)

Padela AI. J Relig Health. 2016 Apr 13. [Epub ahead of print].

[The New Era of Informed Consent: Getting to a Reasonable-Patient Standard Through Shared Decision Making.](#)

Spatz ES, Krumholz HM, Moulton BW. JAMA. 2016 Apr 21. [Epub ahead of print].

### NEWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

[Should Therapists Write About Patients?](#)

Greenberg G. The New York Times. April 19, 2016.

[A Review of Gut Feminism](#)

Kime KG. The Neuroethics Blog. April 19, 2016.



## Resources | Ressources

[University of British Columbia, National Core for Neuroethics](#)

[Neuroethics at the University of Pennsylvania](#)

[International Neuroethics Society](#)

[Neuroethics Research Unit / L'Unité de recherche en neuroéthique](#)

[Journal of Ethics in Mental Health](#)

[Novel Techethics](#)

[Neuroethics at the Stanford Center for Biomedical Ethics](#)

[Berman Institute of Bioethics' Program in Ethics and Brain Sciences](#)

[Centre interfacultaire en bioéthique et sciences humaines en médecine](#)

[The Neuroethics Blog](#)

[Emory Program in Neuroethics](#)

[American Journal of Bioethics Neuroscience](#)

[Neuroethics Women \(NEW\) Leaders](#)



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