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BRAINSTORM

**An interdisciplinary and bilingual newsletter
about advances in health ethics theory and
practice**

**PRAGMATIC
HEALTH ETHICS
RESEARCH UNIT**



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 **IRCM** INSTITUT DE RECHERCHES
CLINIQUES DE MONTRÉAL

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Monthly profile

Jonathan Kimmelman, Ph.D.

Jonathan Kimmelman is a James McGill Professor in the [Biomedical Ethics Unit](#) / [Social Studies of Medicine](#). He has cross appointments in [Experimental Medicine](#), [Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Occupational Health](#), and [Human Genetics](#). Kimmelman holds a PhD in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry from Yale University, and joined McGill in 2005. His research revolves around the ethical, social and policy dimensions of translational research. He received the Institute of Genetics Maud Menten New Investigator Prize, a CIHR New Investigator Award (2008) and a Friedrich Bessel- Humboldt Award (2014), and in 2018 was elected a [Hastings Center Fellow](#). Kimmelman chaired the ethics committee of the American Society of Gene and Cell Therapy, 2008-2010, and chaired the ethics committee of the [International Society of Stem Cell Research 2012-16](#). He also served on the CIHR Stem Cell Oversight Committee, is a current member of several NIAID data safety monitoring boards, and has been a member of four U.S. National Academy of Medicine committee reports. His book, *Gene Transfer and the Ethics of First-in-Human Trials: Lost in Translation*, was published by Cambridge University Press.



Ethical, political, and scientific implications of clinical research

All new medical therapies are born noxious. Only through the arduous work of clinical development and testing are they transformed into life-saving medical and public health interventions. How does this process work? How can we devise systems and processes that maximize the minimize patient burden and maximize the fairness and social value of such exposures?

In the past, most work in my field (“research ethics”) has focused on the ethics of particular trials, particular design practices or particular decisions. While there is much to be learned from this “micro” approach to clinical trials, my research is primarily aimed at interrogating ethical, policy and scientific challenges that emerge when we think of clinical trials as a populations of research efforts. For example, how much human burden is typically needed to unlock the therapeutic potential of new treatments- and how can this be minimized? What sorts of inefficiencies (understood in terms of excess patient burden needed to develop new therapies) and inequities become visible when we consider of “populations” of research efforts rather than individual trials? How good are research systems at prioritizing the most impactful hypotheses for clinical development? What sorts of indicators suggest “diminishing social returns” associated with further efforts pursuing a clinical hypothesis?

My research group (STREAM) consists of about 12 undergraduates, graduate students and postdoctoral fellows; team members have backgrounds that range across philosophy, epidemiology the decision sciences, and various life sciences. We strive to use theoretical / conceptual research to support empirical investigations; many of our empirical investigations uncover dynamics that call for further theorizing and ethical analysis. We also aim to package our work in a manner that is accessible to downstream users in medicine or policy. You can learn more about our work at <http://www.translationalethics.com/>; some publications illustrating our approaches are provided below.

Selected publications

Benjamin DM, Mandel DR, Barnes T, Krzyzanowska MK, Leighl N, Tannock I, **Kimmelman J**. Can oncologists predict the efficacy of treatments in randomized trials? *Oncologist* 2020 Jul 27.

Kimmelman J, London AJ. Clinical trial portfolios: A critical oversight in human research ethics, drug regulation and policy. *Hastings Centre Report* 2019; 49: 31-41

Federico C, Wang T, Doussau A, Mogil JS, Fergusson D, **Kimmelman J**. How pregabalin post-approval trials generate the suggestion of efficacy in new indications: A systematic review. *JAMA Internal Medicine* 2018; 179: 90-7.

Events and announcements

LANCEMENT: Magazine Remue-méninges / Brainstorm magazine

Nous sommes heureux de vous annoncer le lancement du second numéro de [Remue-méninges](#), un magazine sur des sujets d'actualité à l'intersection de la santé, de l'éthique et de la société.



Pour consulter le magazine, [cliquez ici!](#)

The Montreal Health Ethics Conference Series

The Montreal Health Ethics Conference Series is a monthly livestreamed conference aiming to bring clinicians, academics, patients, politicians, public figures, students and community members together to think about and discuss issues in health ethics.

2021 theme: Wellness, health and human flourishing

More than ever, the question of well-being is at the heart of our lives and our concerns, but what role do we really give it in our personal and professional lives and more broadly in our society? Is this ideal accessible to all? How does our health care system respond to different visions of health and wellness? This series of lectures will highlight the perspectives of leading international experts reflecting on ethical issues related to

wellness. The series will also focus on a number of critical interventions that will lead us to reflect on an inclusive vision of wellness and health. [Click here](#) for the conference series calendar.

Upcoming conferences in March:

Virtue ethics as foundational for understanding well-being and health

By Carol Ryff, PhD, Hilldale Professor of Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Madison & Director, Institute on Aging

March 4, 2021 from 12PM to 1PM EST

To register: [Click here](#)

The sound of silence: Bioethics and its engagement with race in Canada

Claudia Barned, PhD, Bioethicist, University Health Network (UHN) & Kevin Rodrigues, PhD, Clinical Ethicist, Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, UHN

March 25th 2021, from 12PM to 1PM EST

To register: [Click here](#)

Appel aux inscriptions : Bioéthique, santé publique et interdisciplinarité : comment et pourquoi?

Colloque du Comité étudiant de bioéthique de l'Université de Montréal
26 mars 2021, de 9hAM à 12hPM (heure normale de l'Est)

Inscription : [Cliquer ici](#)

Pour plus de détails, veuillez contacter Caroline Favron-Godbout caroline.favron-godbout@umontreal.ca ou consultez la [page Facebook de l'événement](#)

Call for applications: Research coordinator for the Pragmatic Health Ethics Research Unit

Montreal Clinical Research Institute, Montreal (Qc)

For more information, [click here](#) or contact Mariana Corroero at mariana.correro@ircm.qc.ca.

Webinar: Hacking the mind: How technology is changing the way we view our brain and ourselves (Brain awareness week)

Organized by: Neuroethics Canada

March 16th 2021, 4PM - 5PM PDT

[Click here](#) for more information.

Register for free by [clicking here](#) for the Zoom details.

Call for contributions: Brains and games international design fiction competition

Organized by: Brains@Play

Submit a creative idea for a brain-controlled multiplayer game to [The Brains@Play](#)

The poster for the 'SÉRIE DE CONFÉRENCES DE MONTRÉAL EN ÉTHIQUE DE LA SANTÉ 2021' (Montreal Health Ethics Conference Series) features a central illustration of a hand holding several people, symbolizing care and support. The text includes the title 'Bien-être, santé et épanouissement humain' and 'Wellness, health and human flourishing'. A calendar lists events from February to December, with dates and speakers. Logos for IRCM, Université de Montréal, and Zoom are also present.

[Initiative](#) and win a brain-sensing headband to play it!
The [competition](#) ends on March 20 and is free and open to all.
For more information, [click here](#).

Call for applications: International online course to become a facilitator of moral case deliberation

Organized by: The Department of Ethics, Law and Humanities of the Amsterdam UMC

For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#) or contact: trainingmb@amsterdamumc.nl
Deadline: April 1st, 2021

Appel aux candidatures : Conseiller(ère) en éthique - Rôle transversal CIUSSS, remplacement à temps complet

Centre intégré universitaire de santé et de services sociaux de l'Ouest-de-l'Île-de-Montréal
Date limite pour appliquer : 2 avril 2021
Pour tous les détails, veuillez [cliquer ici](#).

Literature

Interdisciplinary foundations of health ethics

[Vaccine ethics: an ethical framework for global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.](#)

Jecker NS, Wightman AG, Diekema DS. *J Med Ethics*. 2021 Feb 16. Epub ahead of print.

[The Montreal Criteria and uterine transplants in transgender women.](#)

Balayla J, Pounds P, Lasry A, Volodarsky-Perel A, Gil Y. *Bioethics*. 2021 Feb 7.

[Stopping exploitation: Properly remunerating healthcare workers for risk in the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)

Giubilini A, Savulescu J. *Bioethics*. 2020 Feb 7.

[Nudging for others' sake: An ethical analysis of the legitimacy of nudging healthcare workers to accept influenza immunization.](#)

van den Hoven M. *Bioethics*. 2021 Feb;35(2):143-50.

[Design bioethics: a theoretical framework and argument for innovation in bioethics research.](#)

Pavarini G, McMillan R, Robinson A, Singh I. *Am J Bioeth*. 2020 Dec 15:1-21.

Methodologies and practices in health ethics

[Getting real: the Maryland Healthcare Ethics Committee Network's COVID-19 working group debriefs lessons learned.](#)

Elson N, Gwon H, Hoffmann DE, Kelmenson AM, Khan A, Kraus JF, Onyegwara CC, Povar G, Sheikh F, Tarzian AJ. *HEC Forum*. 2021 Feb 13:1-17. Online ahead of print.

[Family veto in organ donation: the experiences of Organ and Tissue Donation Coordinators in Ontario.](#)

Anthony SJ, Lin J, Pol SJ, Wright L, Dhanani S. *Can J Anaesth*. 2021 Feb 11:1-11. Online ahead of print.

[Randomized trial of community health worker-led decision coaching to promote shared decision-making for prostate cancer screening among Black male patients and their providers.](#)

Makarov DV, Feuer Z, Ciprut S, Lopez NM, Fagerlin A, Shedlin M, Gold HT, Li H, Lynch G, Warren R, Ubel P, Ravenell JE. *Trials*. 2021 Feb 10;22(1):128.

[Enabling first and second year doctors to negotiate ethical challenges in end-of-life care: a qualitative study.](#)

Donnelly S, Walker S. *BMJ Support Palliat Care*. 2021 Feb 9. Online ahead of print.

[Promoting reflection on medical maximizing-minimizing preferences may create undesired effects on decisions about low-benefit and high-benefit care.](#)

Zikmund-Fisher BJ, Shaffer VA, Scherer LD. *MDM Policy Pract*. 2021 Jan 29;6(1):2381468320987498.

News and social media

[Priorisation et handicap: le risque de biais et de discrimination](#)

Cloutier S, Williams-Jones B, Ravitsky V. *Policy Options*. 18 février 2021.

[Le confinement est sans effet ? Le chercheur John Ioannidis défend son étude polémique](#)

Gutierrez NC. *Sciences et avenir*. 6 février 2021.

[Mandating 'vaccination passports' for access to services, travel would be a violation of civil liberties](#)

Richarz A. *CBC News*. February 4, 2021.

[In a year of the plague, a crisis of trust just when Canada needs it most](#)

National Post Staff. *National Post*. January 25, 2021.

[Infodémique et pandémie: preuve scientifique en temps d'incertitude](#)

Lévesque JF. *Réseau-1 Québec*. 18 janvier 2021.

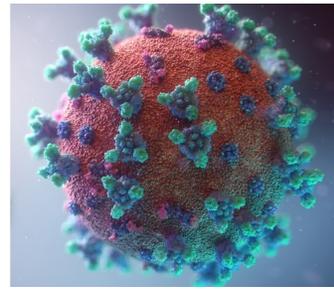
[Vaccination: Québec devrait respecter les protocoles](#)

Bernstein A, Veillette A, Knoppers B. *La Presse*. 16 janvier 2021.

Health ethics and the COVID-19 pandemic

Recent and relevant literature

A list of the most recent and relevant health ethics scholarly publications relating to the COVID-19 response is available on [our website](#).



Other resources

For more resources on pragmatic health ethics theory and practice, visit our website at <http://www.pragmatichealthethics.ca>.



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