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BIOETHICS AND WOMAN: AN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AT THE JUNCTION OF MEDICINE AND SOCIAL SCIENCES*

One of the gaining of feminist, movement -which is wake up again in 1970 at west – has been opening to departments about Women's Studies at universities. One of the first Women's Studies

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Centers opened in 1989 at Istanbul University, and in the intervening 25 years they are opened in Turkey at 17 universities. One of them is – which we are located in, established in 1995 at Ankara University – Women’s Studies Center (KASAUM in Turkish). It is known as a woman academician’s interdisciplinary diversity, and also known as academic wealth of Women’s Studies master program – maintained in 1995 and started to accept students in 1996–1997 educational period.

Basic aim of this presentation is define the «Bioethics and Woman» course – which is take a part in master program since 1997 – contribution to the Women’s Studies. In this respect, for research first has been analyzed to distribution of 51 master students – which are take Bioethics and Woman course between 1997–2012 years – about gender, education before master degrees; and then it has been examined to attitudes and perceptions – which is related to lecture – through to appraise feedback forms – which is implemented by lecturer after every semester. At the second stage of this research, it has been tried to make visible Bioethics and Woman course’s contribution to the era booted its topics. With examples by moving from Turkey’s political arena try to execute on woman body, it will be highlighted to bioethics’ basic topics characteristic in women studies, and also it will be developed suggestions about how discussion fields can be extended.

Key words: Bioethics, women studies, Turkey.

Introduction

For considered to an occupation as a professional job, it requires to has a certain criteria. The basic criteria of them are; the service must be indispensable for humanity and it must be ensure the welfare of the society. When looks at the others criteria, it is observed that these also ensure to that basic criteria. Obviously, to being a professional requires that; to care about the duty, receive highest education, be motivated with the desire to help others, be organized, having common values and beliefs, ability of the take responsibility and decide for ensure the welfare of the society. Therefore, every profession is closely related with the ethics. Since, ethic is a field of philosophy and it investigates the right and wrong. Nevertheless, we can say that; relation between ethics – the philosophy of values – and health related professions – which is fundamental value for society – is more important and more special.

Concordantly, bioethics – which has that particular importance – states an ethics era or department which is developing in ethical plane via examine of the comprehensive problems resultant by developments occurring in biology and medicine, scientific results which depends on various technological developments. Because, bioethics involves entire life [2, 3].

This era has become one of the most important problems or department of philosophy and thought since the late of 20th century. Because it has remarked important problems which is about what is, what to expect and what it should be the human behavior and attitude, in biology and life science era. Scientific developments creates many unusual situations, and its demands a specific features for certain ethical decisions taken. Bioethics was born by force of these multiplicity of specific situations. Also, this situation carry

with its extensive discussions in the bioethics era. Ongoing ethical discussions for centuries, create a new dimension in this level, and it plays the role of interdisciplinary qualification, thus it has to be a research for show up with involved technology, politics and moral issues.

Bioethics is seen as a branch of applied ethics, because on the one hand it involves biology – which is interest all living creatures – implicitly or explicitly; on the other hand it involves moral, social and political issues – which is occurred by these-. Bioethics swerve the medical ethics because of the problem is not only about human life. But bioethics is also involves the medical ethics. The main topics of bioethics are; gene technology, pharmaceutical industry, cloning, euthanasia, human experiments, eugenics, artificial reproduction, abortion, and with these the results of the scientific and technological developments related to life, its boundaries and its principles of usage. Consequently, subjects of bioethics cannot monopolize by scientists, academicians, technicians, philosophers or any others groups [2].

These issues be no longer a problem of known ethical issues in medicine era; and its became extensive problem for medical, social, and political issues. Consequently, despite of being legislator which has the authority and responsibility, bioethics involves everybody within the framework of these questions.

Bioethics and Woman in the Timeliness of the Body Politics

The answer of «What should I do?» question – which is involved by the field of ethics in philosophy – generally locates in the basic of principle. Bioethics searches for the possible answers of «What should be done?» question. The answer is interrogate to the all living's and their environments' health and wellness.

When Descartes says «I think, therefore I exist» that being express himself in a body. The expression that «Woman body is controlled by community» and «This is my body and decision belongs to me» is assumed as a declaration her independence against society law; to dominate physical presence and stand in front of the control are assumed as a rebellion. These expressions are bioethics and woman course's subject of discussion and examination.

When woman consubstantiated with the nature, man is symbolized with logic and controlling of the nature and woman is delivered to the rational knowledge – hence power and man [7]. Simon de Beauvoir, in the «Second Sex» narrated with her own experiment that being a woman under the man power who is controlling the woman and the nature. Bioethics, deal with a mind and body entirely and it includes values debate. Therefore, bioethics must be subject itself to the power case and being a woman.

It is hard to escape ethical questioning of social life – which sighted female body of law and medicine – when it comes to gendering roles shared. Especially, bioethics and woman course develops critical perspective against population policy, reproductive health which is related to the woman's autonomy. To determine by law the lives of women, to making «body politics» and incorporate in the issue with almost every scientific discipline is scientize of the discrimination against women. Who has right to speak about to give birth (or not) is the ethical discussion. Concordantly, bioethics and woman course has responsibility about young academicians' hardware. In Turkiye,

there are some attempts – which is carry out without consulting women – such as; educations related to sexual health and contraceptive methods is no longer public service; termination of unwanted pregnancy up to ten weeks of pregnancy – which has been legal since 1983 right of the give cesarean birth [4, 9, 12, 13, 14].

President of the Republic of Turkiye recently said that: «Birth control is a treason» [16]. Who is the controlling the birth of the women in this country? Law-maker acted with which policy when his controlling (or not). Is this policy to rely on an ethical basis? Is the woman was respected about the autonomy to decide on their own being and body? This course interrogates to ethical problems of making politics out of the woman's body.

In Turkiye, since the early 1890s to today, long years have passed, the work of women in the academic field to be visible [10, 11]. The last thirty five years necessitate to the: versatile researches for equality struggle; to develop women's movement in all eras; to incorporate women's issues in the field of different disciplines. It has been very difficult to make women studies, research to women's problems and find solutions in this long stony road. Like Bell Hooks' says «Feminism is for everyone.» And when feminism departed with promise of an absolute equality; our society disregard of it [5, 6, 8].

Despite of all the impossibilities, women studies in Turkiye has a wide literature by force of women's labor. These departments – who is concern about gender discrimination – signing of scientific publications which is about «women» in academic era. These are argued that being a woman is not limited with born woman; it has been learned in socialization process in society; and this learning normalize to the subordinate position of the women. Today in Turkiye there are nearly twenty university has «woman studies» department [8].

Ankara University Women Studies Master Program's Bioethics and Woman course is a differentiated scape of feminist ethics in medicine's evaluations of moral issues. The course make an occupation for enhance to moral behavior with a feminist perspective in the framework of four basic principles used in traditional bioethics in solving ethical problems. Because, health professionals' knowledge about concepts which is produced in favor of women, will be ensure that more equitable, impartial and moral judgement [15].

In Bioethics and Woman course, reconsiderations to the medical institutions and health care with a feminist perspective. The course aims that; to interest the subject of gender distribution of roles that exist within medicine; sexist practices on the female body through medicine; and public health, with analytical perspective. If we focused on history of medicine with feminist perspective we see that female healers were excluded from the profession when medicine were institutionalized. This process, has been an important factor for settlement of sexist profession approach. The best example can be given is that; in European Middle Ages, witch hunt broke out, and during hundreds of years female healers were excluded from the medicine and hence empirical knowledge has been interrupted [1].

The Content and The Methods of The Course

The course of bioethics and women is the one of the permanent ones of the post graduate programme in Ankara University Women's Studies Center. This course is given by Prof. Dr. Berna Arda, faculty at Department of the History of Medicine and Ethics at Medical School. The course has been taken by 51 students since 1997.

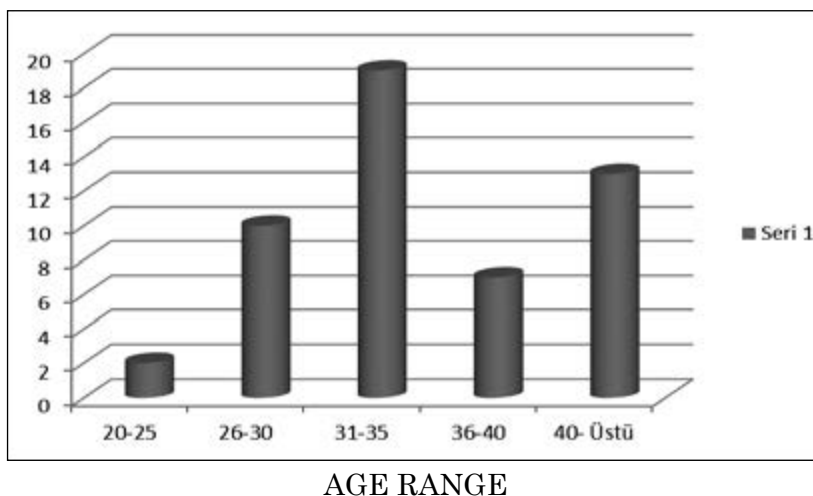
Bioethics and Women lasts, 3 hours in a week, 15 weeks; is also termly. The course that is selective, the students from the other disciplines gets interested. For example, there are the students from the faculties of philosophy, public administration, education, social services, archeology and communications in the group taking the course. By the discussing with the politics of the body, basing the essential principles of the medical ethics; the medical applications that borders the closing the person as just a «principle» are not visible. Therefore, the course has a transdisciplinary position.

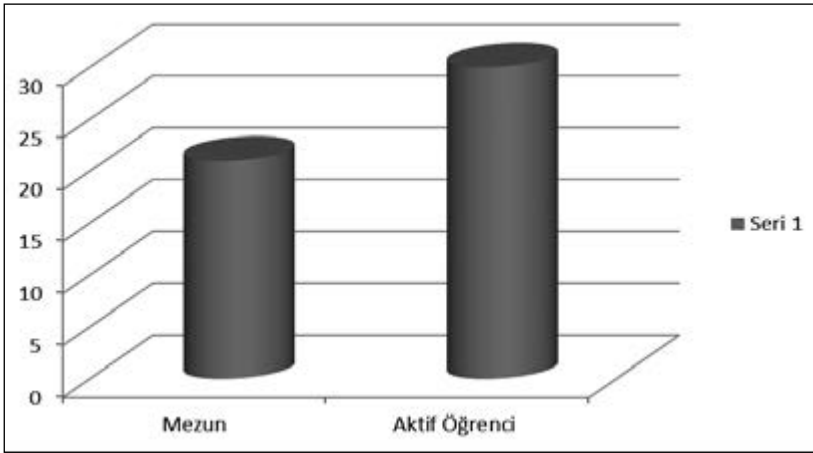
The common purpose of the course; sharing of information about the history of medicine and ethics principles; awareness of the social norms as determinative of the behaviours; the effect of moral to behaviour; being principled to decide in special situations. Therefore, the course is an academic data that is desired to emerge in multi – disciplinary area, a humanistic conscious.

The syllabus has the terms of ethics, the medical ethics and bioethics; the evolution of medicine; the secularism; the physician – patient relationship and women; being woman and the rights of patients; the policy of the population; family planning; academic researches and women; the consultation of hymen; the medical miscarriage-abortion; sharing of information about pregnancy and the methods of sex selection. The participation in the sessions is to be considered important because the attendance of every student effects their awareness level.

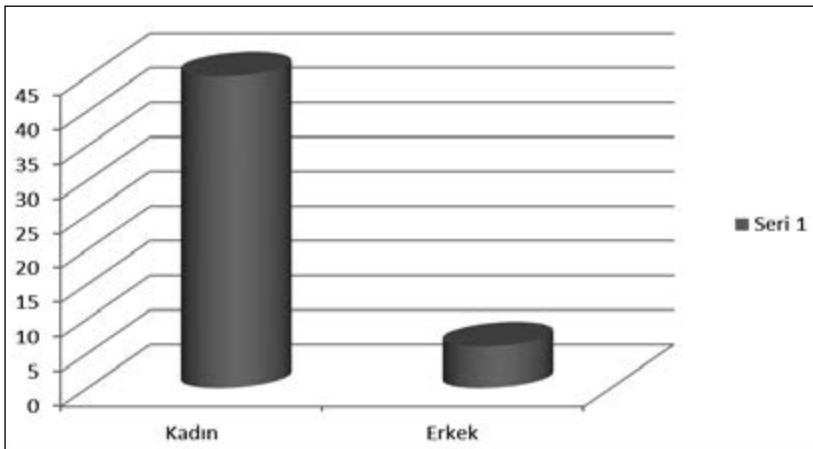
Within the course, structured interviews have been programmed with women instructors who works at the departments of obstetrics and thoracic surgery. In the light of personal experiences, the problems of gender are dealt with their experiences as a woman in the academic circles.

Findings

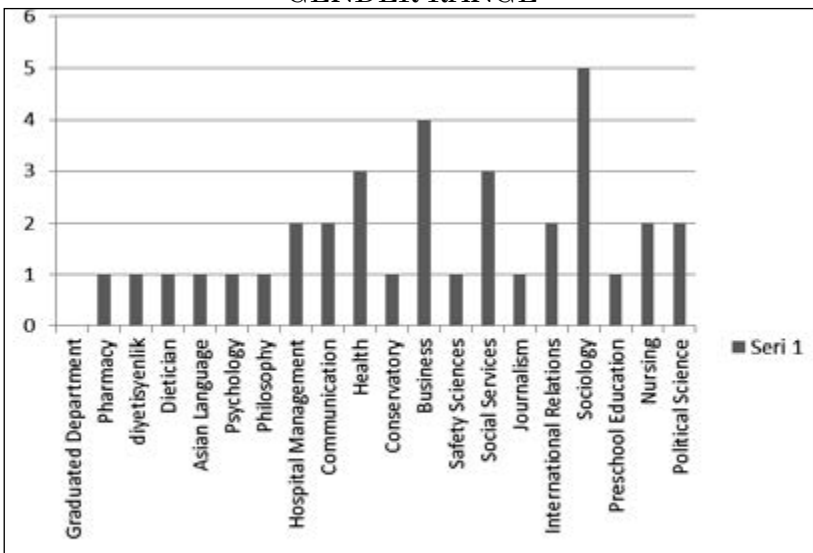




GRADUATE, ACTIVE STUDENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS



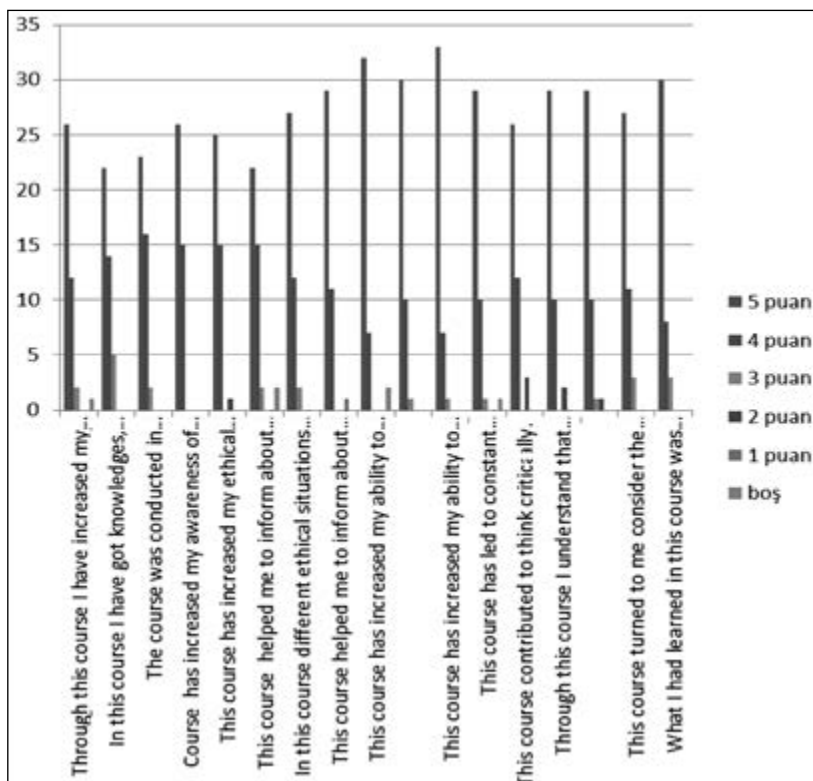
FEMALE/ MALE GENDER RANGE



BACKGROUNDS OF STUDENTS

Feedback Questionnaire

Gathering the views of the students about the lesson have been possible partially by evaluating the feedback questionnaires that are given to instructors in every end of the semester.



FEEDBACK FORM

As a Conclusion

The course of Bioethic and Women, as an educational experience, makes think of being a woman with the philosophical terms of Women's Studies. Therefore, it has a quality of raising not only the knowledge level, but also the awareness. Including the aspects of the history of medicine and ethics principles, emphasizing the humanistic worth of medicine, discussing the social moral worthies in the context of the sovereignty of women, emerging of the humanistic rights of women are strong sides in the syllabus. Additionally, it relates to decision and the feeling of justice. The processing of justice is possible with scientific data is emphasized and the truth of scientific data is effected from social reality so there is a current paradigm which is questionized systematically.

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Біоетика і жінка: освітнянський досвід на перетині медицини і соціальних наук

У статті проаналізовано особливості викладання навчального курсу «Біоетика і жінка» в Університеті Анкари. Окреслено етапи створення навчальних центрів з дослідження проблем жінки в Туреччині. Один із перших таких навчальних центрів з питань досліджень проблем жінки було відкрито 1989 р. у Стамбульському університеті, а згодом, через 25 років, такі центри з’явилися ще в 17 університетах. Один із них заснований 1995 р. на базі Університету Анкари. Автори зазначають, що біоетика є галуззю прикладної етики, оскільки, з одного боку, охоплює питання біології та зосереджується на проблемах живих організмів, а з іншого – вивчає моральні, соціальні та політичні питання. Основними темами біоетики є генні технології, фармацевтична індустрія, клонування, евтаназія, експерименти на людях, евгеніка, штучне запліднення, аборти та ін. Минуло багато років, доки праця жінки в академічному середовищі була адекватно оцінена. Досліджувати і вирішувати проблеми жінки було надзвичайно складно. Водночас саме завдяки праці жінок у Туреччині опубліковано чимало літературних джерел, присвячених проблемам жінок. У багатьох

з них викладені результати діяльності кафедр, які досліджують проблеми гендерної дискримінації, роль жінок в академічному середовищі. Сьогодні такі кафедри функціонують майже у двадцяти університетах Туреччини.

Курс «Біоетика і жінка» магістерської програми з питань дослідження проблем жінки покликаний з'ясувати моральну поведінку з феміністичної точки зору, базуючись на принципах, які використовуються у традиційній біоетиці для вирішення етичних проблем. Курс має за мету зацікавити слухачів проблемами, які існують у сфері медицини з урахуванням гендерного поділу. Якщо проаналізувати історію медицини з феміністичної точки зору, можна зауважити, що цілителі-жінки були відлучені від професії, щойно медицина стала інституціалізованою. Цей процес був важливим фактором формування сексистського підходу до професії. Найпоказовішими є приклади періоду Середньовічної Європи, коли почалось полювання на відьом, внаслідок якого на сотні років цілителі-жінки були відлучені від медицини, відтак, отримання емпіричних знань було перервано.

Курс «Біоетика і жінка» викладається на постійній основі в межах післядипломної програми в Центрі досліджень жінки Університету Анкари. Викладає його професор Берна Арда, яка працює на кафедрі історії медицини та етики медичного факультету цього навчального закладу. Курс, розрахований на 45 годин (по 3 години на тиждень протягом 15 тижнів), є елективним, відтак, обрати його можуть також студенти, які вивчають предмети з інших галузей. Наприклад, курс вивчають студенти факультету філософії, публічної адміністрації, педагогічного факультету, факультету археології тощо. Метою курсу визначено обмін інформацією про історію медицини та етичні принципи, набуття знань про соціальні норми як детермінанти поведінки, про вплив моралі на поведінку тощо. Як навчальний матеріал у межах курсу використовуються інтерв'ю, записані із жінками-викладачами, які працюють в акушерських відділеннях і відділеннях торакальної хірургії. Відтак, гендерні проблеми розглядаються на прикладах з їхнього особистого досвіду.