As biomedical issues of a sensitive ethical nature become more prevalent, KAIMRC wants its young scientists to explore such questions from an academic perspective while remaining mindful of their society’s cultural norms.

The Biomedical Ethics Section at KAIMRC collaborates with UNESCO to offer a postgraduate academic programme to teach students, from a cross-cultural Islamic perspective, how to identify and analyze ethical and moral issues they will face as researchers in their medical and biological practice.

“Ethics is a function of culture,” says Amin Kashmeery, professor of physiology and head of the Biomedical Ethics Section. Religion defines attitudes and responses in Arab culture, he explains, increasing the need for a culturally-sensitive framework that ensures research is up to the highest standards, but is also likely to be accepted and implemented.

The curriculum is offered through problem-based learning techniques that encourage the students to debate and explore dilemmas “according to ethicists who are neutral,” says Kashmeery. The department also set up the Institutional Review Board to protect the rights of patients and research subjects. It reviews every research project submitted before they are given the go-ahead.

Due to illiteracy rates, Kashmeery says many research subjects might not fully comprehend all the information presented to them in a study. “We have set strict criteria to make sure research subjects are not harmed. We do not want to hinder research, but neither do we want people to be compromised.”

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