



SOUTHEAST ASIA  
BIOETHICS NETWORK

SUPPLEMENT TO NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 /  
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# BioethicsWatch



## **Navigating Bioethics Across Southeast Asia: Insights on AI, Climate Change, Refugees and Global Health.**

Awareness of developments across Southeast Asia that impact the field of bioethics is crucial for shedding light on the region's bioethics trends. With the aim of acquainting readers with these developments, *BioethicsWatch* was conceived as a publication that collates selected news items from across the region relevant to bioethics. *BioethicsWatch* is a biannual publication.

In its inaugural issue, covering July to September 2024, the focus is on the significant role of artificial intelligence (AI) in transforming healthcare across the region. Various nations are advancing AI integration in healthcare, improving diagnostic accuracy and patient care, with specific initiatives in imaging technologies and public health systems.

Climate change's detrimental effects are also a key topic, particularly regarding its impact on health and

education for vulnerable populations. Efforts are being made to enhance climate resilience and sustainable practices, with a focus on clean energy and community involvement.

The situation of refugees remains urgent, especially for the Rohingyas, with collaborative efforts between governments and organisations to improve protection and access to healthcare. Discussions around legislation to support refugees and stateless individuals are ongoing in some regions.

Vigilance regarding mpox has increased, with enhanced surveillance and preventative measures in place. Other issues highlighted include rising healthcare costs, inequities in healthcare access, mental health service improvements and ongoing challenges such as shortages of medicines in specific areas.

# BRUNEI

## Call to look at bigger healthcare picture

In response to concerns about patient care in Brunei, an opinion piece in the *Borneo Bulletin* highlights management issues in healthcare, emphasising the need for effective leadership and improved systems. The article underscores the cultural clash between patient expectations and civil servant attitudes, the importance of addressing specialist shortages and the necessity for equitable treatment of patients. It calls for a comprehensive approach to improving healthcare management.

<https://borneobulletin.com.bn/call-to-look-at-bigger-healthcare-picture/>

## Brunei enforces mandatory health declaration for all arrivals amid mpox concerns

Brunei has introduced a mandatory health declaration for all arrivals to address concerns over mpox. This new requirement aims to enhance public health safety by ensuring that travellers report their health status upon entry. The measure is part of Brunei's efforts to prevent the spread of mpox and safeguard the health of its population.

<https://www.theborneopost.com/2024/09/07/brunei-enforces-mandatory-health-declaration-for-all-arrivals-amid-mpox-concerns/>



# CAMBODIA

## Cambodia may face difficulties in reducing HIV infection rates

The Khmer Times article examines the challenges Cambodia faces in lowering its HIV infection rates. The piece discusses factors such as limited healthcare resources, stigma and inadequate access to treatment and prevention services. It highlights the need for strengthened public health initiatives, better outreach programmes and increased support to effectively combat HIV and improve outcomes for affected populations in Cambodia.

<https://www.theioi.org/ioi-news/current-news/ombudsman-urges-government-action-on-health-issues-amid-concerns>

# THE PHILIPPINES

## How AI-powered wearables are transforming health monitoring in the Philippines

The article examines AI's impact on wearable health technology, highlighting real-time vital sign monitoring, health issue prediction and personalised care. It emphasises advancements in the Philippines, showcasing the potential to enhance healthcare outcomes and empower individuals in managing their health.

<https://tribune.net.ph/2024/08/07/how-ai-powered-wearables-are-transforming-health-monitoring-in-the-philippines>

## Workshops with Healthcare Workers to Combat Gender-Based Violence in the Philippines

The article covers recent workshops addressing gender-based violence in the Philippine healthcare sector. Aiming to educate healthcare workers on recognising and responding to GBV, the initiative seeks to enhance safety and support for patients and staff, fostering an equitable work environment.

<https://uniglobalunion.org/news/gbv-workshops-healthcare-philippines/>

# INDONESIA

## Indonesia implements SATUSEHAT Health Pass for international travelers amid Mpox concerns

Indonesia has introduced the SATUSEHAT Health Pass for international travellers amid concerns over mpox. This new digital health certificate aims to streamline entry requirements and ensure health safety. The pass facilitates quicker processing at entry points, helping to safeguard public health while supporting the country's tourism sector.

[https://www.traveldailynews.asia/destinations/indonesia-implements-satusehat-health-pass-for-international-travelers-amid-mpox-concerns/#google\\_vignette](https://www.traveldailynews.asia/destinations/indonesia-implements-satusehat-health-pass-for-international-travelers-amid-mpox-concerns/#google_vignette)

## BPJS Kesehatan to use AI to improve efficiency, healthcare services

BPJS Kesehatan is set to implement artificial intelligence to enhance the efficiency of healthcare services. This initiative aims to streamline operations, improve patient care, and optimize resource allocation across the healthcare system. By harnessing advanced technologies, BPJS Kesehatan seeks to transform healthcare delivery, making it more accessible and effective for the population, ultimately leading to better health outcomes for all.

<https://govinsider.asia/intl-en/article/bpjs-kesehatan-to-use-ai-improve-efficiency-healthcare-services>

## First-Ever Climate Report by UNICEF and Government of Indonesia Calls for Focused Action to Protect Children

The article highlights the disproportionate effects of climate change on young populations, including health risks and educational disruptions. The report calls for immediate and substantial measures to protect children and ensure their well-being amidst escalating climate challenges.

<https://www.unicef.org/indonesia/climate/press-releases/first-ever-climate-report-unicef-and-government-indonesia-calls-urgent-action>



# MALAYSIA

## IN FOCUS: Alleged 'double standard' treatment of Palestinian, Rohingya refugees stirring debate, concerns in Malaysia

The article discusses the ongoing efforts of the UNHCR and the Malaysian government to enhance the protection and integration of refugees in Malaysia. This includes a focus on issuing UNHCR cards to refugees, which helps strengthen their protection and improve access to healthcare services. The collaboration aims to address the needs of various refugee communities, including Rohingya and Palestinian refugees.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/asia/malaysia-refugee-rohingya-palestine-unhcr-work-4407461>

## Doctor's concern over co-payment plans for health insurance

The article addresses concerns raised by medical professionals about the introduction of co-payment schemes in health insurance. The article highlights the potential negative impacts on patients, such as increased out-of-pocket expenses and potential barriers to accessing necessary care. Doctors express worries that these plans may discourage patients from seeking timely medical treatment and could lead to financial strain for individuals already facing health issues.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2024/07/20/doctor039s-concern-over-co-payment-plans-for-health-insurance>

# LAOS

## Laos, WHO join hands to address health-related challenges in the country

Laos and the World Health Organization (WHO) are collaborating to tackle current and future health challenges in Laos, including non-communicable diseases and climate change. The partnership has led to significant health advancements, such as managing COVID-19, eliminating certain diseases, and reducing maternal mortality by nearly 80% since 2000.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2024/07/13/laos-who-join-hands-to-address-health-related-challenges-in-the-country>

## Laos sees spike in prices of healthcare products, medicines amid high inflation

In August, Laos experienced a significant rise in healthcare products and medicine prices due to high inflation. The surge has impacted the affordability of essential health items, highlighting the broader economic challenges faced by the country. The increase in costs reflects ongoing inflationary pressures, affecting both consumers and healthcare providers in Laos.

<https://asianews.network/laos-sees-spike-in-prices-of-healthcare-products-medicines-amid-high-inflation-in-august/>



## Lao PDR Pledges to Address Inequalities in Support for Breastfeeding

The UNICEF press release announces Lao PDR's commitment to improving breastfeeding practices as part of a broader effort to address health inequalities. The government pledges to implement policies and programmes that promote breastfeeding, recognising its critical role in child health and development. The initiative aims to ensure that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background, benefit from optimal nutrition and health support.

<https://www.unicef.org/laos/press-releases/lao-pdr-pledges-address-inequalities-support-breastfeeding>

# VIETNAM

## Vietnam families can't afford children's cancer treatment

This article highlights the financial struggles of Vietnamese families unable to afford their children's cancer treatments. Despite having partial health insurance, many families face insurmountable costs for essential drugs, treatments and living expenses in major cities. Cases like Thanh Tuan's and Le Trinh's illustrate how catastrophic healthcare costs push families into debt and poverty, underscoring the urgent need for more comprehensive health insurance coverage and financial support for these families.

<https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/vietnam-families-can-t-afford-children-s-cancer-treatment-4770179.html>

## Fujifilm takes AI-based health screenings to Vietnam

Fujifilm is initiating the introduction of AI-powered health screening services in Vietnam. The technology aims to improve the early detection and diagnosis of diseases through advanced imaging and AI analysis. This initiative is part of Fujifilm's broader strategy to expand its healthcare services in Southeast Asia, leveraging AI to enhance medical diagnostics and patient outcomes.

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Health-Care/Fujifilm-takes-AI-based-health-screenings-to-Vietnam>

# SINGAPORE

## MOH suspends 2 doctors from making insurance, MediSave claims for 6 months

Two doctors have been suspended for misconduct related to improper insurance and Medisave claims. This action highlights ongoing efforts to maintain ethical practices in the medical profession and protect patient welfare in healthcare financing.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/moh-suspends-2-errant-doctors-from-making-insurance-and-medisave-claims>

## MaNaDr Clinic ordered to halt telemedicine services amid concerns over short consultations, multiple MCs

Manadr Clinic's telemedicine services have faced scrutiny from the Ministry of Health for issuing multiple medical certificates during teleconsultations.

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/manadr-clinic-telemedicine-moh-multiple-mcs-teleconsultation-4550436>

## askST: How Singapore is gearing up to fight mpox

Singapore is ramping up its efforts to combat mpox through comprehensive strategies. The city-state is enhancing surveillance, boosting vaccination campaigns, and reinforcing public health protocols to manage and prevent outbreaks.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/askst-how-singapore-is-gearing-up-to-fight-mpox>



# TIMOR LESTE

## Ombudsman urges government action on health issues amid concerns

Virgílio da Silva Guterres, the Ombudsman for Human Rights and Justice in Timor-Leste, has urged the government to urgently tackle healthcare challenges in hospitals, citing medicine shortages and deteriorating conditions. He is developing recommendations based on insights from healthcare professionals and former managers.

<https://www.theioi.org/ioi-news/current-news/ombudsman-urges-government-action-on-health-issues-amid-concerns>

# THAILAND

## Challenges of the Thai Healthcare System

The article from Thailand Business News outlines significant challenges faced by Thailand's healthcare system. It highlights issues such as the impact of an ageing population, rising healthcare costs, and inequalities in access to quality care. Despite the strengths of Thailand's healthcare model, these challenges require innovative solutions for sustainable funding and efficient resource use.

[https://www.thailand-business-news.com/health/150645-challenges-of-the-thai-healthcare-system#google\\_vignette](https://www.thailand-business-news.com/health/150645-challenges-of-the-thai-healthcare-system#google_vignette)

## Thailand's Siriraj Hospital expands AI use in mammogram, CT brain services

The article reports on Siriraj Hospital's latest advancements in incorporating artificial intelligence into its medical services. The hospital is expanding its AI applications to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of mammograms, CT scans and brain imaging. This initiative aims to improve diagnostic precision, streamline workflows and offer better patient care through innovative technology.

<https://healthcareasiamagazine.com/healthcare/news/thailand-siriraj-hospital-expands-ai-use-in-mammogram-ct-brain-services>

## Heuron expands medical AI to Thailand and more AI briefs

Heuron is expanding its medical AI solutions in Thailand to improve healthcare services. The expansion includes implementing advanced AI technologies for diagnostics and patient management, aiming to enhance accuracy and efficiency in medical practices. This move underscores the increasing integration of AI in healthcare across Asia, promising better outcomes and streamlined operations in the region's health systems.

<https://www.mobihealthnews.com/news/asia/heuron-expands-medical-ai-thailand-and-more-ai-briefs>



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