“Beyond the Four Principles: An Overview of Bioethics Theories”
Bioethics Honors Program Boot Camp

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Always Do the Right Thing
How do we make ethical decisions?

• Personal morality
• Religious traditions
• Professional ethics
• Ethical Theories
Focus on Ethical Theories

- Giving Reasons
- Universalization
- Impartiality
- Reasonableness
- Civility
  - Pence G. Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases (McGraw-Hill, 2015)
Fallacious Reasoning

- Slippery Slope
- Ad hominem
- Straw person/red herring
- Appeal to authority
- Appeal to feelings/emotion
- Ad populum
- False dichotomy
- Begging the question

- Pence G. Medical Ethics: Accounts of Ground-Breaking Cases (McGraw-Hill, 2015)
Consequentialism

• Focus on consequences
• Maximizing utility, happiness, health
• What are the advantages and shortcomings of such a theory?
Mr. J is a 58-year-old man who has been mostly homeless for the past eight years. He has a number of chronic medical conditions of which end-stage renal failure is his most critical. He has been receiving hemodialysis for six years. Because he does not have health insurance and is not eligible for Medicaid in the state in which he resides, Medicare covers many of the costs associated with care for his kidney disease under the end-stage renal disease benefit.
Mr J and Dialysis

- Mr. J is not a known substance abuser but does have significant mental health issues and has preferred to live on the streets rather than in the shelters and the halfway houses to which he has been assigned. He has also proved to be unable to maintain a relationship with outpatient dialysis centers, despite multiple attempts and interventions by social services. He is an ultra-frequent visitor to the university hospital emergency department (ED), with up to ten visits a week in the cold winter months. Most of his dialysis is administered there or at the hospital’s inpatient dialysis facility. Not surprisingly, his erratic care and his lifestyle have contributed to a slow deterioration in his overall condition.
Mr J and Dialysis

• The physicians who see him most often—ED physicians and hospitalists—believe that further provision of dialysis is a waste of hospital and national resources (and their time); they believe that Mr. J is incorrigible and is “using” them and the system for his own purposes. They wish to unilaterally stop treatment and switch him to hospice care, even though Mr. J retains decision-making capacity and expresses a desire to continue living as he has been doing. Should the physicians be able to limit his access to specific kinds of care by appeals to his excess consumption of resources they believe to be in short supply?

Deontology

• Focus on duty
• Main tenets:
  • Make sure your rules are universalizable
  • Always treat others as ends and never merely as means
• What are the advantages and shortcomings of such a theory?
Virtue Theory

- Focus on character
- What kind of person are you? What kind of physician are you?
- What are the advantages and shortcomings of such a theory?
From the community: Loyola physician believed to be only doctor to be both an organ donor and recipient

By Community Contributor jritterz

Susan Hou, MD, who altruistically donated a kidney to one of her patients and later received a kidney from her father, is the only doctor to be both an organ donor and recipient.
Ethics of care

• Focus on relationships
• Focus on our common vulnerability
• What are the advantages and shortcomings of such a theory?
Four Principles (Beauchamp and Childress)

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Non-maleficence
- Justice

- What are the advantages and shortcomings of such a theory?
Four Topics Approach (practical application of Four Principles)

- Medical Facts
- Personal preferences
- Quality of Life
- Contextual Features

- What are the advantages and shortcomings of such a theory?
The Case of Dax Cowart

- https://vimeo.com/64585949