



MAKATI MEDICAL CENTER
BIOETHICS EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE



BIOETHICS BITS



CASE STUDY 9

WELL-FORMED CONSCIENCE

CASE

A health care professional harbors doubts regarding the moral acceptability of some procedures he cooperates in at the hospital where he works. Unable to resolve the question, he feels troubled with the thought that he might be continuously performing acts of injustice towards the patients.

QUESTION

What should he do to minimize dilemmas and perplexities in making professional decisions?

POSSIBLE SOLUTION

Persons in the medical field commonly experience difficulty in making decisions, especially when dealing with matters of life and death. Even simple procedures could greatly affect the patients' welfare in the long run. Furthermore, knowing that one deals with the patients in the right way proves advantageous, given that a clear conscience certainly helps ease one's burden and gives peace of mind.

The principle of well-formed conscience states that to make good moral decisions, medical professionals should:

1. Examine the facts of a given situation.
2. Examine the ethical principles that apply to the case on hand.
3. Make a judgment of conscience as to the best course of action to follow.
4. Act on the basis of this judgment.
5. Accept responsibility for whatever consequences might result.

While medical knowledge remains necessary for the first step outlined above, the study of Bioethics (also called Medical Ethics or Medical Morals) proves necessary for the second. Bioethics seeks to facilitate the health care professionals' work by providing a framework for ethical decision-making – helping them arrive at decisions more easily (even regarding life and death, such as whether to withdraw overly burdensome treatment or not).



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IDEA ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK & WORKSHEET

SCAN HERE



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