

No longer patient - feminist ethics and health care

Temple University Press - No Longer Patient: Feminist Ethics and Health Care by Susan Sherwin



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Feminism -- Moral and ethical aspects

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A feminist challenge to practices of medicine

Contemporary ethical guidelines for critical care give ambiguous advice, largely because they focus on the moral equivalence of withdrawing and withholding care without confronting the very real differences regarding who is aware and informed of intervention options and how patient values are communicated and enacted. Merely postponing an inevitable death might be vital for a patient seeking social, spiritual or any other personal closure, whereas to doctors the deferral of death is not perceived to be beneficial, as the outcome is the same.

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Clinical guidance documents for life support decisions assert the importance of physician integrity in withholding or withdrawing futile treatments; yet the values content of relevant factors—futility and benefit—suggests that patient consent to withholding or withdrawing treatment might be ethically required from the patients themselves or their proxies.

No longer patient : feminist ethics and health care : Sherwin, Susan, 1947

Many of the guidance documents emphasise the importance of communicating with patients. Although favouring Biegler's proposal, we would expand its relational perspective. And even an intervention viewed by a doctor as having a 0% chance of achieving its physiological goal might function and be desired by a patient just in case it might be helpful.

No Longer Patient

Proportionality assessments depend on subjective predictions about benefit and harm, which vary with perspective.

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