The author concludes with the admission that: "I have been forced quite dramatically to re-think what kinds of moral arguments must be brought to bear on questions of rationing and institutional design. I now think we must pay much more attention to problems of fair process and to refinements of democratic theory." It is likely that many of those who read this book will find themselves questioning their own views on these important questions.

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Bioethics: an Introduction to the History, Method and Practice

Edited by Nancy S Jecker, Albert R Jonsen and Robert A Pearlman, Sudbury MA, Jones and Bartlett, 1997, 416 pages, £31.25 pb

This collection of forty-seven essays, divided into three distinct sections, covers the historical development of bioethics, its methods of analysis and the application of these methods in health care settings. The bulk of this material has already been published in journals over the past fifteen years, but the three editors of this textbook - who have experience in teaching bioethics at all levels - maintain that this particular combination covers the much neglected history of the field and offers a comprehensive explanation of the methodologies used to analyse ethical issues as well as the techniques for applying ethical analysis in the various settings where health care is practised.

The opening section, on the history of bioethics, covers the moral questions raised by the "new biology" and includes discussions on transplant surgery, experimentation on human subjects, patient consent, and dilemmas in relation to euthanasia, non-intervention, and the prolongation of life. The actual emergence of bioethics as a discipline is charted in essays by Daniel Callaghan, K Danner Clouser, and Stephen Toulmin. In the second section, which covers the methods employed by bioethicists, such as Singer, Beauchamp and Childress, there is a distinction drawn between deductive and inductive approaches

and critiques of both are appended. This section also includes a variety of papers on empirical studies and there is a final subsection which addresses cultural assumptions in bioethical analysis. Of interest here is Fox and Swazey's comparison between medical ethics in the US and China.

The third section, relating to the practice of bioethics, covers the role of hospital ethics committees and the training of ethical consultants. There is also a subsection on clinical policy development, with selections from published official documents on child abuse as well as the Patient Self Determination Act from the US, and selections from the President's Commission on Deciding to Forego Life-Sustaining Treatment, as well as from the California Natural Death Act. This section also includes statements from professional associations, such as the American Medical Association's position on the ethical implications of the AIDS crisis, and a statement from the American Academy of Neurology on aspects of the care and management of persistent vegetative state (PVS) patients. A final subsection evaluates cultural assumptions in the practice of bioethics with particular reference to race, gender and class.

This is a valuable teaching aid which could become an essential course-book for postgraduate courses in all aspects of health care ethics.

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Birth to Death. Science and Bioethics

Edited by David C Thomasma and Thomasine Kushner, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, xvi + 382 pages, £40.00, \$54.95 hb, £14.95, \$19.95 pb

In this extremely well-documented educational overview the authors trace current challenges to our values posed by biological discoveries in science and medicine before birth, through genetics, to our deaths, sometimes despite medical technology. These current challenges are collected in sections, most of which have three chapters. Each section combines a sketch of the most recent advances in the particular field, namely, advances in genetics, reproductive technologies, children and women in health care, transplantation, aging, prolonging life, care of the dying, euthanasia and

physician-assisted suicide, humans research subjects, using animals research, and finally the environment. Each of these short sketches about the scientific advances - most of which have been made during this century - is followed by ethical commentaries. Sometimes these commentaries represent opposing views, sometimes they reflect complementary issues. Only the most fundamental disagreements are highlighted.

This book is useful for education purposes in that it gives an overview both of the most recent developments in science and medicine, and the most essential ethical reflections. Reflections concerning limiting access to health care and the allocation of scarce resources are remarkably absent. This illustrates, however, the very strong emphasis on micro-ethics and bioethical problems, linked with the technological revolution in medicine and medical science. The educational usefulness of the book is enhanced by the editors' very useful summaries at the beginning of each chapter, and by suggestions for further reading at the end of the chapters.

This educational emphasis may give the impression of a work that contains nothing new for the experts; fortunately this is not the case. It is clear that the editors invited the most renowned experts and that they commissioned all the chapters as fresh contributions. There is only one exception to this, namely the contribution of Leon Kass on Why doctors must not kill. This overview is therefore even interesting and challenging for those who have long experience of bioethics and of progress in medical science.

Examples of some of the challenging topics in this book are: the capabilities of science and medicine in forging a good society (D Callahan); the need for reproductive technologies to "measure up" to assisting people with disabilities in their reproductive powers (A R Jonsen); the acceptability of a market economy for organs (K A Sells); the usefulness of the four principles analytic framework as a method of analyzing ethical issues in transplantation (R Gillon); the case for financial incentives to relieve shortage of organs (J F Blumstein); practical guidelines for dealing with dementia as part of a philosophy of care (S Post); views on quantitative and qualitative medical utility (N S Jecker and L J Schneiderman); the evolution of ethical principles governing research on human subjects (H