

It provides an understandable jolt, and probably a useful one at that. Yet it is also ideological in the sense that large amounts of empirical fact are ignored, albeit this is part of the genre. It is a book about which reviewers will want to say little, except to recommend it to readers for their own judgment.

Now, AIDS is as much a heterosexual issue as a homosexual one. The activism of Kramer, who is now HIV-positive himself, will probably have saved human lives in the long run. For courage, he is to be commended. The organization he founded, AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) continues to thrive. This book is a period piece, not a classic, and should be read as a manifesto of AIDS activism in an era when evidence does suggest more attention might have been devoted to this epidemic more quickly.

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Principles of health care ethics

Edited by Raanan Gillon and Ann Lloyd, Chichester, Wiley, 1994, 1,118 pages, £125.

In the first sentence of the preface Raanan Gillon describes this as an 'enormous book'; it certainly is, with its 1,118 pages including the index and weighing at least 5 lb. Reviewing such a book poses itself an ethical dilemma as it takes approximately 50 hours of steady and careful reading which has to be fitted into six weeks of a busy, professional life! In the case of this book, however, it will certainly be time well spent, whether one attempts to read sections of it in full or merely to focus on one of the multi-faceted chapters, written by over 100 contributors. The book is divided into five parts covering health care ethics from international, multi-cultural and multidisciplinary perspectives. Gillon invites these contributions to reflect and consider a common theme of the four 'prima-facie' principles of health care ethics proposed by Beauchamp and Childress *viz* respect for autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence, and justice and their scope of application. In Part I, 'Approaches to Applied Health Care Ethics', reviews

from various philosophical and religious perspectives are lucidly and often trenchantly given, encompassing, for example, two Roman Catholic views, one traditional and the other more liberal, through Judaism, Islam, Buddhism and Humanism, as well as reflections from more classical deontological (Furness) and utilitarian (Hare) viewpoints, and other eclectic approaches, namely African, feminist and rights-based and ideals-based perspectives. Many acknowledge the utility of the four-principles-plus-scope approach, deriving this support from these very different cultural and philosophical backgrounds, but, unsurprisingly, not all are supportive of what Nicholson and others refer to disparagingly as the 'Georgetown mantra'. Clouser and Gert refer to the four principles as a 'mere checklist of moral concerns', others to their 'shallow and eclectic' philosophical justification. These various views are admirably discussed in the 'reappraisal' chapter by Gillon, acknowledging the concerns (especially of Clouser, Gert and Botros) that the four principles do not provide a coherent moral theory but contending they make no such claims, merely aiming to be compatible with many, if not most, moral theories and thereby providing a trans-cultural, trans-national, trans-religious and trans-philosophical framework for ethical analysis, which has inherent flexibility and wide applicability.

In Part II, 'Relationships and Health Care ethics', problems between health care workers and their patients are discussed, recognising the core commitment towards benefit of patients while simultaneously respecting their autonomy. Contributions derive from medical and nursing sources and from patients and the issues of paternalism, consent in clinical and research contexts, confidentiality, truth-telling and rights are all covered. Typically, effects of the business culture and market-orientated approaches on the practice of medicine are discussed. Patients' views are lucidly supported by Julia Neuberger, both as 'true' patients and as research subjects and there are chapters both for and against paternalism. Legal aspects of consent issues are lucidly explored, especially in clinical research and randomised control trials. Medical confidentiality is debated in two chapters with contributions on promises, truth-telling and lying and their relationship to the doctor/patient relationship.

The third section covers Moral Problems in Particular Health Care

Contexts from the beginnings of life (abortion, fertility treatment and handicapped neonates), via psychiatry and psychotherapy, health care in the elderly to dementia and dying, including euthanasia. Many contributors provide opposing views, thus Davis requires 'Maximising the life chances of all babies who are not actually irremediably dying' while Harris states: 'There is no justification for thinking of the human zygote, or embryo, or fetus, or neonate as in any way morally equivalent to full human persons'.

In Part IV, 'Health Care Ethics and Society', such contemporary themes as management in health service, allocation of scarce resources, Quality Adjusted Life Years (QALYs) health promotion, public health, epidemiology and occupational health care are covered in detail and even drug addiction, AIDS and research ethics in modern society are debated. An anomalous chapter by sociologists disparaging respect for autonomy ends this section.

The final section on Ethical Problems of Scientific Advance concentrates on genetics (genetic counselling and genetic manipulation), *in vitro* fertilisation and organ transplantation, persistent vegetative state and finally on ethical issues of animal research. Chapters are included on genetic counselling, gene therapy, with clinical and philosophical contributors on brainstem death where, like Gillon in his introduction, most clinicians will find the philosophical arguments against the concept of brainstem death unconvincing. Controversial to the last, the final two chapters respectively support and reject the use of animals in medical research.

This book is encyclopaedic in its approach. The various arguments are, in general, lucid and cogently presented. It is well referenced, up to date and has an excellent index. I suspect it will find its place predominantly as a work of reference but it will amply reward some long dips into various sections and the general quality of the writing is such that when attempting to consult merely one or two chapters the temptation to read on to the end of the section may be overwhelming. I strongly recommend this book, which, I am sure, will become a classic in health care ethics.

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