Alternative Principles and Perspectives of Clinical ethics

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Bioethics is a field of study concerned with the ethical issues in the medical and biology field. Bioethics explores all factors affecting the medical practice. It clearly explains the ethical issues arising from the interaction between biotechnology, politics, law, and even philosophy. Additionally, bioethics helps address various controversial topics in the medical field that physicians and other medical practitioners might find challenging during their day to day decision-making.

**Concerns of Bioethics in Relation to Science and Philosophy**

There is a number of bioethical concerns that are currently debatable in the medical field. These are topics that have not been fully addressed or defined.

**Abortion**

Abortion is the premature termination of a pregnancy whether willingly or unwillingly. An abortion that has occurred by itself is referred as a miscarriage while a forced abortion is the one that has been induced either by a surgery or administration of medications. The abortion issue has been debated for long with many philosophers unable to explain whether life begins at birth or during conception ("Bioethical Issues - Abortion", 2018). Additionally, questions on whether the life of fetuses should be protected or the mother should be granted the power to decide on what happens to the fetus are yet to be addressed. Moreover, most governments find it hard to determine whether abortion should be illegal or not. If it is illegal, what are the exceptions which a pregnant woman may be allowed to abort? If it is legal, should the government fund it? Furthermore, in the case where abortion is illegal, women intending to conduct abortion will still seek help from unlicensed and unequipped practitioners (Kaczor, 2014). In addition, matters like whether the opinion of the father should be considered before an abortion is conducted are yet to be discussed and properly defined. Finally, on the issue of willingness. Is it the mother’s will to abort due to different factors or is it due to pressure and coercion from family and other interested parties? The issue of consent should be properly addressed to reduce the number of forced abortions. However, with respect to the deontology theory, there is a number of duties that need to be performed by a human being. Among these duties is the duty of malfeasance. This is the duty that says that we should not do any harm to any creature. As a result, performing an abortion and terminating a pregnancy harms the fetus. Reasoning from this point of view means that the abortion issue needs to be properly addressed to prevent people from harming innocent fetuses.

**Organ Donation**

With the advanced medical procedures, it is now possible to conduct organ transplants from one person to another. There are various body parts whose transplant has been made possible. These organs include kidney, liver, heart, lungs, and body tissues, for instance, cornea. There are various controversies surrounding organ transplant and donation. One of the main concerns in organ donation is consent. In the case where a patient is in the intensive care unit, should they be allowed to decide on whether they want to donate their organs after death or not (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2016)? Additionally, concerning minors, should they be allowed to donate their organs voluntarily? Moreover, with the high demand for organs such as kidneys, issues such as organ theft from living human being arise. Organ donation might be commercialized. With this, illicit organ dealers may target the poor and vulnerable people in the society. Proper procedures for handling organ donation should be defined to ensure all organs are legally acquired (MacDonald & Shemie, 2017). Another concern about organ donation is the organ transplant waiting list. Fair and open methods of structuring the transplant waiting list should be employed to ensure the needs of all patients are met. There should be equal access to organs despite a patient’s past life. This can reduce the number of deaths resulting from long lists of organ recipients. Reasoning from the deontology theory’s duty of beneficence, humans are encouraged to do good deeds always. Donating body organ is a very beneficial and lifesaving decision since once a healthy organ is passed to the affected person, the patient’s life is made better and it is prolonged. On the other hand, according to Kant’s categorical imperative theory, human beings should not use others as means to reach their goals or to bring happiness to their lives while causing pain to others (Mandal, Ponnambath & Parija, 2016). As a result, organ donation should only be done when a donor issues consent. Finally, according to Rawl’s theory of justice, there should be equality and justice in organ donation. For instance, during the distribution of organs, the patients should have equal access to the organs without being discriminated or any form of favoritism. The utilitarianism theory suggests that humans should choose deeds that will produce the greatest good and benefit most people. Organ donation accurately fulfills the utilitarianism theory since it allows people to donate their organs to help the people suffering from different diseases and disorders.

**Euthanasia**

Euthanasia is the intentional termination of one’s life upon the patient’s request. Euthanasia can be either passive or active. Passive euthanasia is one that the physician participates passively by withdrawing a life-saving intervention so as to allow the patient to die as per his/her request. Active euthanasia is where the physician administers medication to the patients so as to end their lives (Boudreau & Somerville, 2014). The main concern about euthanasia is its legality. Ending someone’s life whether by their request or not is illegal in most countries. Additionally, encouraging euthanasia weakens the efforts to fight suicide. It gives people an easier way of ending their lives without seeking professional help. Another dilemma associated with euthanasia is that physicians are supposed to save people's lives and make them happier. According to the duty of maleficence in deontology theory, human beings should not cause harm to others (Mandal et al., 2016). Euthanasia is against this principle of practice (Jones, Gastmans & MacKellar, 2017). Moreover, although euthanasia benefits the patients, it might be against religious beliefs and values. Finally, euthanasia might be misused and be used as an alternative method of reducing medical care cost.

**Outcomes Depending on Ethical Approaches**

In organ donation, there are different ethical approaches that can be applied. First, the collection of organs should be legal. Illicit organ donation occurs when the organ is collected from a living or a dead donor without their consent or willingness due to coercion. Additionally, an illegal donation may occur when a living donor or a third party benefits financially from an organ donation. In addition, if a third party benefits financially from a deceased donor, then the donation is assumed to be illegal. In the situation whereby people sell their organs, they are most likely to be put through substandard procedures during the organ collection process (MacDonald & Shemie, 2017). This leads to damages to their bodies and in case of poor post-donation care, they might even die. Moreover, commercialization may reduce the number of people willing to donate their organs because most will opt to sell their organs for financial gains. This is likely to affect the number of organs available legally for transplantation. If the issue of organ commercialization and illegal organ collection is properly dealt with, the number of people selling their organs due to coercion and misinformation will decrease hence increasing the number of willing donors. This will increase the number of transplants done annually hence improving the outcomes. Secondly, the issue of donor consent should be prioritized. Donors should be allowed to issue explicit consent before they donate their organs whether they are living or deceased donors (Dalal, 2015). This should be strictly followed to protect people from any form of coercion or donation against their will. Organs from deceased donors should only be collected from donors who consented to have their organs donated while they were alive. This will ensure human rights are followed and the health standards are upheld. Seeking consent will protect people from any harm hence respecting the deontology theory. In addition, organ donation that has been done after consent has been granted by the donor ensures that both parties are satisfied by the whole procedure and everybody is happy with the final results. This properly satisfies the utilitarian theory (Mandal et al., 2016). On the issue of recipients’ waiting list, there should be equality and fairness in the allocation of the organs so as to ensure all the patients despite their medical history or their past lifestyle are equally served. This will reduce the instance of corruption in the hospitals (Simpson, 2012). Additionally, it will also curb the cases of illegal collection, buying, and selling of human organs. This properly follows the Rawl’s justice theory which insists that all patients should be equally treated especially during the distribution and allocation of organs to the patients. This improves the general medical outcomes. If the structuring of the recipients’ waiting list is handled in a manner that lacks transparency more people will go on losing their lives as they wait for a transplant despite the urgency.

**Legalization of Abortion**

There has been a big debate on whether abortion should be legalized or not. Below are arguments for and against the legalization of abortion.

**Arguments for the Legalization of Abortion**

First, women are human beings with the right to choose what they want to do with their bodies. Just like any other human being has the right to choose what to do with their bodies, women should not be dictated on what to do with the pregnancies they carry. They should be allowed to terminate the pregnancy if at all they feel that bringing the baby will have negative effects on their lives. According to the Aristotelian virtue theory, our personal happiness comes first and it should be our primary goal. If pregnancy does not bring happiness to the pregnant mother, she has the moral right to terminate it in pursuit of happiness. Additionally, there is no need to bring an unwanted baby into the world by forcing a pregnant woman to keep the pregnancy. If women are forced to carry and give birth to babies they do not want to, the cases of street children, child labor, and child abuse will be on the rise ("should abortion be legal?", 2017). Secondly, if abortion is legalized, the number of maternal deaths and injuries resulting from illegal abortionists will reduce drastically. When abortion is illegalized, pregnant women will still seek assistance to conduct abortions from unlicensed and poorly equipped abortionists. This is likely to increase the number of deaths and injuries during the process since the processes followed during these abortions are totally dangerous and unprofessional. Additionally, modern abortion procedures and equipment are safe and do not have any future effects on a woman's life. Research shows that the probability of a mother dying during an abortion is 0.6 out of 100000 abortions while the probability of dying during childbirth is 8.8 out of 100000 ("should abortion be legal?", 2017).

Moreover, personhood begins after birth, not after conception. Abortion, therefore, is not the termination of life but the termination of a pregnancy. That is why unborn babies are not considered as members of the community during the census. As a result, fetuses do not have moral rights hence abortion does not break any human right at all (Will, 2012).

**Arguments against Abortion**

First, if abortion is legalized, women might misuse that right and make abortion a method of contraception. If abortion is fully allowed without any form of regulation, some women might conduct a series of abortions whenever they feel like they are not ready to deliver. Abortion should not be used as an excuse for pursuing happiness. As stated in the categorical imperative theory, we should not use other creatures as means of achieving our goals but instead, we should treat others the way we would like to be treated. As a result, abortion compromises this theory. Furthermore, they might decide to take abortion as an alternative family planning method which is totally wrong and immoral. Moreover, legalizing abortion shows that human life is valueless and disposable. This is because the fetus that is removed during an abortion is not just an object but a creature that could have become a human being. This is because a human being is any life form that possesses the human DNA. Thus terminating a pregnancy is literary killing a human being. This is morally and spiritually unacceptable. Life begins at conception. As a result, fetuses should be respected and granted all the human rights among them the right to life (Will, 2012). In addition, allowing pregnant women to abort just because they carry the fetuses in their wombs is totally wrong. Just because women own the fetus in their wombs, they have no moral right to end the lives of these fetuses because they possess the same value as normal human beings ("should abortion be legal?", 2017). According to the deontological theory, once a woman becomes pregnant, she possesses the duty to take care of the fetus and to protect it from any harm or danger.

In conclusion, bioethics should be properly addressed to ensure that the human life and human rights are protected. The concerned parties should also ensure that relevant regulations are applied to these controversial issues in the medical field so as to eliminate any form of confusion or dilemma during practice.

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