

Review of: "Conscientious objection to enforcing living wills: A conflict between beneficence and autonomy and a solution from Indian philosophy"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I thank the authors for this article. Let me offer a few brief comments:

Principles of ethics are not to be ranked as one does not hold primacy over another. Each principle need to be weighed based on the context and specifics.

It is not disrespectful to critically look at dicta and commandments of ancient texts- eastern or western- as they were appropriate for those times and may no longer be relevant to present times. (eg; parts of “ Leviticus” in the Bible).

As a physician (pulmonology & intensive care), teacher, and as a fellow human being, I am very saddened by the fate of the 89-year-old patient you presented. She or he must have been a thoughtful person as she had a living will as most do not. But her thoughtfulness and foresight in preparing her exit from this world were for nought. Her right, as an autonomous person, living in a free society was violated. In my view there are no conflicts between principles of ethics and her wishes should be carried out. However, the treating physician declined on the basis of beneficence; so did another physician. A physician has a right to do so, but I am left in the dark as to what scripture prescribes endotracheal intubation and mechanical ventilation for organ failure? I am also unconvinced by the explanations given for not finding an alternate care taker or facility.

Here, the legal system was ahead (supreme court decision referred to in the article) in affirming the basic right of the patient but the health system (providers and hospital) and the ethics oversight system failed.