

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

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The article is very interesting.

It presents a case in which an Indian doctor had to seek support from a panel of experts to resolve an ethical dilemma during the COVID-19 pandemic in India in May 2021.

On the one hand, Indian law promotes dignified death and the existence of advance directives, or living wills, which set out a person's wishes on how to die or how to act medically in an end-of-life process. However, from the point of view of bioethics, culture is extremely important in India, and some Indian texts may contradict the patient's autonomy that is sought as a fundamental principle of bioethics in the process of caring for a terminally ill patient.

Some texts, such as Ayurveda, situate the doctor/patient relationship as paternalistic, with patients having to surrender themselves to the doctor without having any say in their decisions.

In the case presented here, there is a clear conflict between the legality represented by the principle of autonomy and cultural influence. The 89-year-old patient was admitted for COVID-19 and even though he had written in his living will that he did not want resuscitation measures or mechanical ventilation, he found it difficult to find professionals who would accept his wishes, as they refused to withhold life support measures because of religious beliefs. He had to go through several medical professionals, even considering a change of hospital.

Here we could open the debate about where legislation and ethics should begin and end when they are contradictory? Or should the patient's wishes or the wishes of the attending professional take precedence?

Among the deliberations of the expert panel, they concluded that beneficence and non-maleficence, represented by the conscientious objection of the professionals who had to attend him, should take precedence over patient autonomy, but are we sure that they were acting under the principle of beneficence by prioritising the wishes of the professionals?

In the same article, a contradictory reflection from Tirukkural is put forward, which goes something like this: those in positions of power must put the welfare of others before their own.

Of course, the strong point of this article is that it is even more thought-provoking if one does not know or deal with Indian

culture on a daily basis. Therefore, my congratulations to the authors of this text.

From a scientific point of view, in the preparation of the article I find that the case itself, which I find very interesting, occupies a small place in the whole article, and yet the exposition of the defunct Indian texts is very extensive.

I also found that the bibliographical references are somewhat old: 1994, 1999, 2004, 2007, 2009.

I am sure that there are much more recent texts that could have been used for the realisation and justification of this work.