

Nursing ethics: ethical decision making approaches

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



The paper "Nursing Ethics: Ethical Decision Making Approaches" is a great example of an essay on nursing. There are various ethical decision-making approaches that can help individuals as well as groups in deciding which actions are right or wrong. One such ethical decision-making system is the utilitarian approach to ethics even recognized as utilitarianism. This ethical decision making system states that before solving an ethical issue different solutions should be weighed on the basis of a cost and benefit analysis and those solutions should be used or applied that result in the highest amount of benefits and lowest amounts of costs and this analysis should be conducted while keeping in view the impact the solution will have on the entire society and not on one single individual or a group (Littleton, 2005, p. 80). Another ethical decision making approach suggested by theorist Kant is the categorical imperative view which states that while selecting a particular solution for a problem or while taking any action an individual should accept the same act being considered against themselves under the same or any other scenario and the individual be ready to consider that act as correct and if the individual is not ready to accept the same action being carried against him in any situation then those actions should be considered as unethical (Littleton, 2005, p. 80). Approach Selection

The ethical approach of utilitarianism seems to be better for solving ethical issues because firstly it is quite a straight forward method and secondly this method does not take into consideration the viewpoint of one individual or a group, it gives consideration to the entire society and weigh the benefits of the entire society over individual benefits and lastly because it weight both the positive and the negative side of all solutions.

Application of Utilitarianism to Assisted Suicide

Assisted suicide is one of the heavily debated subjects in the field of medicine and there are two sides which either support assisted suicide or reject it. Assisted suicide is referred as the termination of an ill person's life with the intent of terminating life with the assistance of life taking the drug and an official from the field of medicine is directly or indirectly involved in helping or assisting the ill person to take his/her life. Whether assisted suicide is an ethical or unethical act, the utilitarian approach of ethics can be applied to the dilemma. The utilitarian approach states that the decision of helping others should be taken on the basis of whether that decision will result in happiness or despair for the individual as well as his/her family members. If a medical officer assists an ill person who is suffering from immense pain in taking his/her own life to help them in gaining relief from that pain, the act of assisted suicide should be considered as ethical as well as legal (Maris, 2000, p. 457). If the decision of assisted suicide for a terminally ill patient who is on the death bed and is suffering from unbearable pain is taken while giving importance to the happiness that the ill patient will get from the action, the decision should be considered as ethical. Helping a person in relieving pain through assisted suicide does not only lead to happiness for the patient, it even results in relief for those who are connected with the patient. For example, the patients suffering are not only unbearable for them, but they are also even unbearable for their loved ones and secondly, the medical expenditure for treating such a patient is even quite expensive (Posner, 1995, p. 244). If a medical official helps a patient in committing suicide then his/her family members will attain relief from seeing

their loved one in pain and both the patient as well as the family members will be relieved from paying the expensive bills for treating the patient.

Another reason due to which assisted suicide is considered as an ethical action under the light of utilitarianism is that if a terminally ill patient wants to take his/her own life to relieve their pain and are denied of the right to choose what is right and wrong for them, this would make their lives further miserable, while helping them would be a better option since he would gain happiness for being allowed to decide his/her own fate.

Conclusion

The subject of assisted suicide, as well as other ethical dilemmas, is faced by nurses in medical facilities on day to day basis. Nurses are more close to patients as compared to the physicians as they are the ones who are providing care to the patients at all time. They are the ones who have to see the patients feel the pain due to deadly diseases and they feel it is their duty to help them decrease or eliminate this pain. Nurses can use the approach of utilitarian ethics in order to decide whether they should help a patient in taking their life or not.