

The dilemma of jehovah's witness children who need blood to survive

[Philosophy](#)



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Abstract

According to the Jehovah's Witness beliefs, blood transfusion is disobeying God and meaningless because it would forfeit the hope of everlasting life.

Based on this belief, this paper is going to analyze the dilemma of the case of a child of Jehovah's Witness whose life was in danger and was subjected to blood transfusion against the will of his parents.

The case of the Jehovah's Witness child is such a dilemma. According to Jehovah's Witness religious belief, blood transfusion is an act of disobeying God (Catlin, 1996). However, the dilemma was that the child's life was in danger and the parents wanted the child's life to be saved. According to the doctor in charge, the only way the child's life would have been saved was through blood transfusion (Catlin, 1996). While physicians are mandated to uphold high level of professional ethics in their work which includes the virtue of helping others regardless of their cultural or religious backgrounds, in this case, the dilemma was on how to apply principles of medicine in order to save the child's life and how to respect the religious belief of the parent. The goal of medicine includes, among others, curing disease and preventing untimely deaths (Catlin, 196). Therefore, the physician was to apply his professional ethics in order to save the life of the child which actually was the desire of the child's parent. The only contradiction was on how to do it. Since there was no other available means of saving the life of the child, the parent ought not to have protested blood transfusion because their refusal

for blood transfusion would have led to the death of the child. In fact, this would amount to committing another sin which would be interpreted to mean murder. Although freedom of religion is highly valued by and protected by the US constitution, parents are granted with discretion about the values they believe their children's lives should embody, but this discretion is limited in medical care when certain beliefs would disadvantage the child's health (Catlin, 1996).

It is important for the believers of Jehovah's Witness to critically think of the implications of their beliefs. If the belief in one way or another contributes to death, it's not worth upholding.

Reference

Catlin, A. (1996). The dilemma of Jehovah's Witness children who need blood to survive. *H E C forum* 1996; 8(4): 195-207.