

Ethical case study: jose

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



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Ethical Case Study: Jose The principle of autonomy strongly suggest that the patients have the right to make their own personal decision with regards to their preferred care and treatment (Finkelman & Kenner, 2013, p. 180; Chiovitti, 2011). For this reason, nurses are expected to respect the patients' decision with regards to their own preferred care and treatment. Even though nurses are obliged to respect the patient's decision with regards to their own preferred care and treatment, nurses should also keep in mind that they need to equally satisfy the principles of informed consent, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice (Finkelman & Kenner, 2013, p. 181; Chiovitti, 2011). To avoid facing legal charges related to professional negligence, nurses should always observe the principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice. Specifically the principles of non-maleficence mean that all decisions made by the nurses should not end up harming or injuring the patient (Chiovitti, 2011). The principles of beneficence strongly suggest that nurses should do only good actions that can contribute a positive impact over the patient's health and well-being (Finkelman & Kenner, 2013, p. 181; Chiovitti, 2011). Lastly, the principle of justice strongly suggests that nurses should be fair to all (Chiovitti, 2011; Polit & Beck, 2004, p. 159). In respect to the principles of non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice, nurses should remind the physician that the overuse of antibiotic may result to the development of antibiotic-resistance. To avoid making the physician feel embarrassed, nurses should carefully and politely explain the long-term health consequences of prescribing the antibiotic to the patient. By doing so, the nurse can avoid the risk of facing legal charges related to professional

negligence. Likewise, reminding the physician about the long-term health consequences of prescribing the antibiotic will give the physician the opportunity to come up with another solution that will not aggravate the psychological, mental and physical health of the patient. It is unethical on the part of the nurses to just follow the physician's order without determining whether or not the prescribed drug could do some harm to the patient. Even though administering antibiotic to the patient does not have immediate harm, its long-term consequences do not justify the act of assisting the patient to take the drug simply because the physician has agreed to prescribe the antibiotic. By administering the antibiotic to the patient, the nurse does not only violate the law of non-maleficence, but also the law of beneficence and justice. The principles of autonomy is not merely all about making a personal decision on proper treatment and care; it is also about 'self-determination' wherein the patient is entitled to make a voluntary plan on how he would go through with life (Savulescu, 1994, p. 647). With regards to 'self-determination', the nurse should assist the patient with his decision-making by initiating a subjective discussion with regards to all the possible consequences of taking antibiotics (Savulescu, 1994, pp. 647 – 648, 654). Informed consent is all about teaching the patients general information about their treatment, care, or medication (Finkelman & Kenner, 2013, p. 180; Chiovitti, 2011). In this case, nurses should inform the patient that the overuse of antibiotic may result to the development of antibiotic-resistance. Developing antibiotic-resistance means that the antibiotics may no longer cure the patient in case he is infected with bacteria. If the patient insists that he wants to take the

antibiotic after the careful explanation to the patient that the process of over using the antibiotics can make him develop resistance-to-antibiotics, the nurse has no other choice but to follow the patient's decision (regardless of whether or not the patients' reasons behind taking the antibiotic is rational or irrational) (DOH, 2001, p. 3). Instead of arguing with the patient, the nurse should request the patient to sign the informed consent form to prove that it is the patient's decision to take the antibiotic despite warning him that it can lead to the development of antibiotic-resistance (Finkelman & Kenner, 2013, p. 195). By letting the patient sign a written consent form, the nurse can avoid the risk of professional negligence. In case the nurse is not sure on how to avoid being accused of professional negligence, the nurse should immediately seek professional advice from the legal experts. When seeking legal advice from the experts, nurses should observe the law of confidentiality. It means that the nurse should not disclose the name of the patient to the legal experts. Instead, the nurse should just simply describe the case scenario without mentioning anything that could reveal the patient's true identity to the legal experts. References Chiovitti, R. (2011). Theory of protective empowering for balancing patient safety and choices. *Nursing Ethics*, 18(1), 88-101. DOH. (2001). Retrieved October 23, 2012, from Seeking Consent: Working with Older People: http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_4009325 Finkelman, A., & Kenner, C. (2013). *Professional Nursing Concepts: Competencies for Quality Leadership*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning. Polit, D., & Beck, C. (2004). *Nursing Research: Principles and Methods* (7th ed.). PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Savulescu, J.

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