

Jehovah's witnesses and refusal of blood products. describe an encounter that dem...

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Jehovah's Witnesses and refusal of blood products. Describe an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you. Members of the Christian sect Jehovah's Witnesses do not accept blood transfusion. This restriction is mandated by the religious doctrine and has been in existence since 1945. The rationale is that life is God given and that human agency shouldn't intervene in its termination. Hence, in all medical situations, including emergencies, the faithful are prohibited from taking or giving blood and blood products. This can create dilemma for doctors and nurses attending to a patient, especially in the emergency room. Should medical professionals heed to the Hippocratic Oath and do their best to save a life? Or, should they respect patients' religious beliefs and compromise on quality of healthcare?

Since there is no straightforward answer to these questions, healthcare professionals will have to tread the balance between medical ethic and cultural sensitivity. Such discretion is all the more necessary in a country like the United States, where there is such diversity of race, religion and cultural background. For example, nearly a third of the population is derived from various racial minorities, while religious expression also varies from conservative to liberal. In this regard, it is a prerequisite for healthcare professionals to take into account the cultural restrictions and religious doctrines of individual patients before deciding on a course of treatment. Just like Jehovah's Witnesses have their own code of conduct, so too do various other denominations of Christianity followed in the country. Similarly,

Muslims have their own mandates to follow. Hence, understanding and accommodating diversity is important for those in the healthcare field.