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Ethics Journal Consider a case of a nurse required to attend to a patient suffering from a terminal illness and has days to live. The nurse is forced to attend to this patient at the expense of other patients because he is bound by duty to do so. The nurse has to attend to the patient without focusing on the nature of illness. In normative ethics, which is a branch of moral philosophy, people are required to choose between good and bad, right and wrong actions (Noureddine, 2001). Under moral philosophy, the nurse's actions are guided by deontological ethics in which ethics focus on what people do, not the outcomes of the actions. In this case, taking care of the patient is the right thing to do.

In the above situation, intentions are important in a moral life because actions are not just based on their outcomes but on the intentions. In this case, the intention of the nurse is to make the patient comfortable and treat him equally like any other human being. Although the patient will eventually die, the nurse has a duty to treat the patient without focusing on the final outcome. Therefore, intention is what guides action, not the consequence. Treating a person with respect involves recognizing his value as a human being, and treating him with a high degree of politeness and courtesy. It involves restraining from any conduct or actions that could either degrade or harm the person (Rich & Butts, 2013). This also involves respecting the ability of a person to make independent decisions about himself and his life. However, a person may not be treated with respect for purposes of restoring order and justice. This may also be done in order to punish the individual for wrongs committed. A person may not be treated with respect if there is the need to discipline such a person.

References

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