

Case study example

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Case Study Affiliation: Health care provision is important for progressive societal growth and development. Individuals and the society at large are entitled to quality and affordable care, amid the underlying challenges in care giving practices. On the same note, health care practices are governed by legal frameworks, ethical conducts, and societal expectations (Katharine, 2005). These aspects are critically reflected in the Lakeberg's case. The separation of the Lakeberg twins was a measure of the interaction and relationship between medical practice, health care ethics, and society-based expectations.

The separation of the Lakeberg twins put forward a number of ethical issues related to saving lives at the slimmest chance of survival. When Reitha was observed to be carrying Siamese twins, doctors recommended an abortion due to the limited chances of survival for the babies. This recommendation poses an ethical issue relative to the doctors' choice that seemed to highly influence the parents. This situation was worsened by the underlying financial challenges that the couple was going through at the time the doctors made the recommendation. The doctors failed to assess the couple's family situation, given that their consent to abortion may have been forced by their financial situation.

On the abortion issue, a critical dilemma emerges. Both Ken and Reitha had a difficult decision to make. This decision would consequently measure their ethics and respect for human life. Although Reitha never undertook the abortion, her ordeal was not set to end at that point. Seven weeks after she delivered, the couple took its chance to have the Siamese twins separated. With slim chances of one baby surviving, if not both, the move to separate the twins puts medical ethics on the spot. A combination of high medical

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costs and slimmest survival chances in cases of medical practice might present doctors as money-oriented and patients as medically irrational (Snyder, 2005). However, doctors have a duty to save lives, attend to patient needs, and satisfy patients' will. The dilemma in this case lies in deciding the point at which such provisions fail to hold.

Given that the Siamese twins had a fused liver and a shared heart, it was medically obvious that one of the babies would be sacrificed to save the other. In this case, Amy would be saved subject to the doctors' medical decision. The parents were provided with an already made decision, an aspect that questions whether it was ethical to make that decision on behalf of the couple. Notably, this could have been a difficult decision for the couple given that they were biologically connected to the twins. The doctor's decision countered this dilemma.

Health care costs have persistently increased over the years, and health care coverage remains a pertinent issue in the United States (Ginny, 2009). The Lakeberg's case triggered a contentious issue in relation to whether thousands of dollars should be spent on saving lives with the slimmest chances of survival, or such monies should be directed to the better interests of the larger society. Whatever the case, an underlying decision of who lives and who dies and when comes into the picture. This poses an ethical challenge, just as it poses a dilemma relating to individual, societal, and governmental choices and decisions in matters similar, or in line with, the Lakebergs. Ultimately, there are diverse and dynamic issues, concerns, interests, needs, and will to consider in evaluating the ethicality of variant medical practices.

References

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