

Weight of cultural, religious, and spiritual claims in the clinical context

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Patients must also understand the sensitivities related to medical practice. For example, the case of physician-assisted suicide must be understood. Religious beliefs may go against this, but people must understand that sometimes it becomes crucial for the physicians to make the patient die with dignity and peace rather than leave him to die in distress. People confuse negative rights with positive ones, as we see that the patient's family insists upon occupying the waiting room on religious grounds. On the other hand, the importance of spiritual, religious and cultural beliefs can also not be denied, since these beliefs form the basis of a national or cultural identity which cannot be compromised upon. Hence, a middle path must be sorted out that satisfies both the medical considerations of the case and the spiritual/religious/cultural beliefs linked to it, just like Buryska (120) states, "The ethical principles that must be balanced are respect for autonomy (the wishes of the patient) and beneficence (the physician's judgment of what is best for the patient)".