

Applying the Four Principles: Case Study

Part 1: Chart (60 points)

Based on the "Healing and Autonomy" case study, fill out all the relevant boxes below. Provide the information by means of bullet points or a well-structured paragraph in the box. Gather as much data as possible.

Medical Indications	Patient Preferences
<p>Beneficence and Nonmaleficence</p> <p>James, the patient, is an 8-year-old boy brought to the hospital with complications of strep throat infection, and it turns out to be acute glomerulonephritis and kidney failure. He also has blood pressure and enough fluid build-up to require temporary dialysis. The doctor suggests immediate dialysis, which the parents forego and believe a miracle will happen. They return two days later, with James's condition having deteriorated. He is on constant dialysis and will require a kidney transplant within a year.</p>	<p>Autonomy</p> <p>The parents make health decisions for their son since he is not old enough to make health decisions. They chose healing through miracle over dialysis. The decisions lead to James' deteriorating condition. They agreed to take the dialysis the second time. They are ready to donate their kidneys for their son, but it turns out they are incompatible. They choose to allow other donors from the church, who are also incompatible. They are only left with one option, Samuel, James' twin brother. They are yet to decide whether Samuel should donate the kidney or wait for a miracle. All through,</p>

	<p>the doctor does not interrupt their decisions. According to Lewis and Holm (2022), it is the care providers' responsibility to allow patients to exercise autonomy without influencing their decisions.</p>
<p>Quality of Life</p> <p>Beneficence, Nonmaleficence, Autonomy</p>	<p>Contextual Features</p> <p>Justice and Fairness</p>
<p>The physician suggests James undergo regular dialysis to ensure no harm occurs and he gets back to stability. Here, his quality of life is not desirable. Patients under regular dialysis often experience side effects, such as muscle cramps and hypotension (National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases, n.d.). However, the suggested kidney transplant will mean no more dialysis, thus improving his quality of life.</p>	<p>Mike and Joanne understand that James deserves a good quality of life and agree that he would require a transplant. They offer to donate their kidneys, but it turns out they are not compatible. All the donors they found are also not compatible. However, Samuel, James' brother, is compatible. The parents, however, think it is unfair for Samuel to lose a kidney and struggle to decide whether they should wait on God for a miracle.</p>

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Part 2: Evaluation

Answer each of the following questions about how the four principles and four boxes approach would be applied:

1. In 200-250 words, answer the following: According to the Christian worldview, how would each of the principles be *specified* and *weighted* in this case? Explain why. (45 points)

Medical ethics and religious views may agree with or contradict each other. However, they are encountered in daily practice, and thus, it is essential to understand how they can be used to make decisions in different cases. In this case study, the principles can be weighted as follows;

Autonomy; in the case study, Mike and Joanne are exercising autonomy by deciding what medical action should be taken for their son James. The Christian worldview holds that parents have the responsibility of taking care of their children, nurturing them in discipline and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). In this case, it means that Mike and Joanne should decide on the decisions that best suit Samuels and James spiritual and physical well-being.

Justice and fairness- according to the Christian worldview, all people are equal in the eyes of the Lord and therefore deserve to be treated with justice and fairness. In this case study, it would be unjust for James to be denied the offer of his brother's kidney since he is the only compatible donor. It would also be unfair to deny Samuel a chance to help his brother due to being young.

Beneficence and nonmaleficence- the Christian worldview stipulates that every life is sacred and should be protected. In the studied case, the doctor tries to protect James from harm by suggesting all possible actions that can be taken. He is also ready to support the decision that will benefit the parents since they aim to protect life.

2. In 200-250 words, answer the following: According to the Christian worldview, how might a Christian *balance* each of the four principles in this case? Explain why. (45 points)

A Christian is supposed to evaluate all the four principles in a given situation and apply them based on the situation to make the most suitable decision. A Christian should also try to balance beliefs and ethical principles to ensure that the decision does not depend on one side and end up making poor or questionable decisions.

The principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence will ensure harm is minimized and the decision made is mindful of others.

Christians are expected to love each other. Love your neighbor as you love yourself (Mark 12.31). Lack of taking action can cause more harm to James, and he can even die. Beneficence and nonmaleficence will ensure love and the sanctity of life by taking all possible measures to save James. The act of kidney donation is also a show of love for one another.

Autonomy, in this case, is required for the decision on the cause of action. Mike and Joanne are still struggling to decide whether Samuel should donate a kidney to his brother or they should just wait on God to do a miracle. Christians should seek God's will and lean not on their understanding while making decisions. However, waiting for too long may have consequences on James' health. Mike and Joanne should, however, act fast. In conclusion, the balance of ethics and the Christian worldview will fall on beneficence and nonmaleficence in this case. James' life is sacred and should be protected.

References:

National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases. (n.d). *Treatment for Kidney Failure in Children*.

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/kidney-disease/children/treatment-kidney-failure>

Lewis, J., & Holm, S. (2022). Patient autonomy, clinical decision making, and the Phenomenological reduction. *Medicine, Health Care, and Philosophy*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11019-022-10102-2>

The English Standard Version Bible. (n.d.). <https://www.esv.org/>