



A PUBLICATION OF THE CENTER FOR HEALTHCARE ETHICS, ST. JOSEPH HEALTH SYSTEM, ORANGE CALIFORNIA

ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

A NEWSLETTER ADDRESSING THE INDIVIDUAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIETAL DIMENSIONS OF ETHICS

Issue #16 **3-D Pictures of the Heart Without Surgery** December 1995

M.D. Nurse Other (specify) _____

A new technique -- echo-CT -- allows us to view inside the beating heart without cutting it open. A new generation of machines -- a technological marriage of ultrasound and CT scanners -- produces three-dimensional pictures that look like ordinary movies. Doctors can simulate slicing through the heart at any angle, then peek inside and watch valves flap and chamber walls pulse. The startlingly sharp pictures look as though a miniature video camera had somehow been threaded into the heart and turned on.

Advocates say that the technology's most promising advantage is giving surgeons an advance look at what they will see when they operate. Such a perspective offers substantial advantages for the outcome of surgery. Critics are concerned that the improved diagnostic advantage is bought at a disproportionately high cost.

This case can be considered from the perspectives of individual ethics, institutional ethics and societal ethics. Please answer the following questions in these areas using this scale:

1 strongly agree 2 agree 3 not sure 4 disagree 5 strongly disagree

Please use pencil, blue or black ink only. Darken marks completely. Make no stray marks.
Incorrect Marks: **Correct Marks:**

Individual Issues

1. Individuals in such dire need have a right to this care.

1 2 3 4 5

2. It would be cruel to deny this treatment to someone who could benefit from it.

1 2 3 4 5

3. If I can pay for it, I should be able to get such care.

1 2 3 4 5

4. It would be unjust to deny a surgeon access to such a clinical advantage.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Where life is concerned, we should not talk money.

1 2 3 4 5

Institutional Issues

1. The AMA should press for the funding for such technology.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Insurance companies could rightly deny payment for such treatment.

1 2 3 4 5

3. A quality hospital will provide such treatment as soon as possible.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Labor unions should insist on coverage for such treatment when it is available.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Hospitals should develop guidelines to prevent the overuse of such an expensive technology.

1 2 3 4 5

Societal Issues

1. Society should limit such development in light of an overall set of health priorities.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Society should see to it that the entrepreneurial spirit of America is the only limit set to such ventures.

1 2 3 4 5

3. Federal guidelines should steer funds away from this to basic care.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Once such technology is developed we need to slow the development of treatments.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Society should not provide public monies for such research until all children are vaccinated.

1 2 3 4 5



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
 YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**