



ETHICAL DIMENSIONS

Issue #19

A Long-Term Care Case

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Mrs. D., a resident in a long-term care facility, was a Christian Scientist for all of her adult life. Lately, Mrs. D.'s behavior has changed from peaceful and pleasant to suspicious, paranoid, and physically aggressive. Her condition could be treated with psychotropic medication, but in the past, she had clearly refused medication for health problems due to her religious beliefs. The physician and other staff have determined that Mrs. D. is no longer capable of making a decision. Recently, when Mrs. D. physically attacked another resident, one of the staff insisted that medicating her was less of an indignity than isolating her, locking her up, or physically restraining her. The staff is divided on how to best respect Mrs. D.'s dignity.

This case can be considered from the perspectives of individual ethics, institutional ethics, and societal ethics. Respond to the statements below using the following scale:

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

<i>Individual Issues</i>	<i>Institutional Issues</i>	<i>Societal Issues</i>
1. Mrs. D.'s wishes are clearly known for this situation. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	1. The institution should have a clear policy that religious preferences are honored, no matter what. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	1. Society cannot be too careful in protecting the rights of patients in such settings. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
2. Mrs. D. has a right not to be medicated. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	2. The institution should have consistent staff education and discussion of such issues. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	2. Harsh penalties should punish the violation of residents' rights in such situations. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
3. Other residents have a right to have Mrs. D. removed from their living space. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	3. The institution should do whatever it takes to make Mrs. D.'s life as pleasant as possible, regardless of her wishes or its own policy. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	3. There are too few resources dedicated to long-term care facilities for treating such situations adequately. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
4. Giving Mrs. D. medication would be the least indignity at this point in her life. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	4. The institution should have a mechanism for providing surrogate decision-making in such situations. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	4. To meet such needs of the elderly, our society should allocate more resources to long-term care. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5
5. There can be no grounds for giving Mrs. D. medication. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	5. Without outside perspectives, the institution is likely to act in its own self-interest in resolving such questions. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 5	5. An increase in long-term care funds should come from limits set on acute care and not simply from taking more of the GNP for health care. <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4 <input type="checkbox"/> 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.**