

PHIL 226 Biomedical Ethics

- Please turn off and put away all electronics.
- Exercise 1 due Sept. 27.
- Exam 1 Oct. 4.



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Allocation Problems

- Macro-allocation: How should a society divide up its resources to fund health care?
- Micro-allocation: Within a health care system, what services should be provided?
- Purposive: Define what health is, then deduce what should be covered (biological)
- Functional: Look at the function of health in the broader society (social)

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Needs

- **Need:** Condition without which a person would be harmed.
- **Vital need:** Something without which a person cannot function as a human being .
- **Competence:** Psychological need to engage optimal challenges and experience physical and social mastery.
- **Autonomy:** Psychological need to self-organize and regulate one's own behavior and avoid control by others.
- **Relatedness:** Psychological need for social attachments and feelings of security, belongingness, and intimacy with others.

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Ontario Allocation

- How much of the Ontario budget should go to health care?
 - 2012-13: \$47.6 billion for health care.
 - 30.5 for education, 14.3 for social services
 - \$15 billion deficit. Future generations?
- Should taxes be increased to pay for more health care?
- How do consequences, rights, and principles apply to these questions?

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Discussion

- How should Ontario balance spending for health, education, and other services?

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How to Ration Health Care?

- Cost and effectiveness.
 - Evidence-based medicine
 - Quality adjusted life years: QALY.
- Moral worth and contribution to society?
- Ability to pay?
- Age?

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Medical Evidence

	Improvement	No improvement
Treatment		
No treatment		

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Age and Health Care

- Option 1: Treat old people the same as anyone else.
- Option 2: Restrict expensive medical treatments for old people.
- Arguments for Option 2:
 - Old people have had a fair share of life.
 - It is more tragic if a young person dies.
 - Spending too much on old people has bad overall consequences.

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Human Rights

- A human right is a high-priority claim owed to every person. What rights are there?
- Skeptical: none.
- Minimal: right to avoid being harmed.
- Basic: personal security, material subsistence, personal freedom, elemental equality, and social recognition.
- Maximal: Canada charter and UN.

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Alcoholics and liver transplants

- Consequences: non-alcoholics will have better outcomes.
- Rights: but don't alcoholics have the same rights to health care?
- Principles: does equality require equal treatment of alcoholics?
- Related: smokers, obese?

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Resource allocation guidelines

1. Choose interventions known to be beneficial on the basis of evidence of effectiveness.
2. Minimize marginally beneficial tests or interventions.
3. Seek low cost treatments and interventions.
4. Advocate for one's patients but don't manipulate the system.
5. Resolve claims for scarce resources fairly on the basis of need and benefit.
6. Sensitively inform patients of cost constraints.
7. Seek resolution of shortages.

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Futility

- Futile situations: vegetative state, CPR, organ replacement for dying patients.
- Problems with futility based arguments:
 - Ignore the values of the people involved.
 - Futility is always probabilistic.
 - Neglect resource allocation decisions.

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