Medical Assistance in Dying: Ethical Concerns

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Most Significant Ethical Concern?

- Ethical concerns as an individual (personal), as a physician within my professional "I"
  - Autonomy recognized and respected
  - Informed Access
  - Protecting the vulnerable
  - Conscientious objection
- Ethical concerns as part of a group (citizen), health care provider "We"
  - Providing Equal Access, providing equal understanding
  - Respecting individual Autonomy, Understanding the person who is the patient
  - Protection of the vulnerable and respect conscientious objection

Conversation Surprises: personal and professional

- The moral debate regarding whether Medical Assistance in dying "should" be provided as changed to "how it should" be provided.
- General public acceptance of Medical Assistance in Dying
- General public and professional misconceptions regarding the process of providing Medical Assistance in Dying
- Within the medical profession, the fear of being publically identified as a provider of Medical Assistance in Dying
Approach to ethical deliberation

- Personal
  - What is my personal moral standard
    - Personal reflection
      - What are my personal thoughts and concerns
      - What is my view on the value and meaning of life and death
      - What is my view on the nature of suffering and the nature of self
      - Where do I stand on the moral continuum of respect for autonomy and sanctity of life
      - Where do I stand on the moral continuum of quality of life and sanctity of life
      - How do I understand and demonstrate the principles of beneficence and patient autonomy
      - Does my moral standard include respect for other moral perspectives
  - Canadian Medical Association Self-led Online Module on Medical assistance in dying
    - Moral Considerations

Ethical Deliberations

- Professional
  - When Darkness Comes: A values clarification guide on euthanasia and assisted suicide for health care professionals
    - Understanding perspectives from the patient, the family, the caregivers and the health care team
    - Reflecting on
      - personal and professional death and dying experiences,
      - patient autonomy and decision making,
      - competency and comfort with end of life conversations,
      - team functioning,
    - Familial influences on values
    - How have my personal and professional experiences changed my perspectives on death and dying
    - what is my understanding of unbearable suffering
    - "the minimum professional and ethical behaviour, conduct or practice expected of physicians licensed with the College"