



EDEN ALLEY

The Priority Patient

BIOMEDICAL ETHICS DILEMMA OF
MATERNAL FETAL CONFLICT

LIBERTY
UNIVERSITY



THE NEED FOR AN *ETHICAL THEORY*

Possessing a clear ethical theory helps consistently guide decision making and inform difficult situations.

WHAT IS MATERNAL/FETAL CONFLICT

Pregnancy poses a unique challenge in the field of medical ethics since the impact on two or more individuals must be studied when providing treatment.

Maternal/fetal conflict describes instances where maternal decisions may negatively impact the safety of the fetus.

PHILOSOPHY AND HEALTHCARE

Fracturing these disciplines, claiming they cannot exist together, poses harm to patients and care personnel.

There are many areas of biomedical ethics that cannot have one right answer for every situation. Careful consideration, thought, and reflection should be consulted using the tool of an ethical theory.

ETHICAL THEORIES

Utilitarianism – Morality is what produces the most good for the most people

Divine Nature Theory – Morality stems from the nature of God. Instead of God commanding goodness, God is good. Morality is absolute and discoverable through general and special revelation.

WHAT ARE THE ETHICAL RIGHTS OF A FETUS

What does our ethical theory lead us to believe about the rights of a fetus?

If God sees the unborn as possessing personhood and worthy of protection, then they must have the same right to beneficence and non-maleficence as the woman carrying them.

AUTONOMY

The ability to self-rule.

Even if a woman's decision is detrimental to the fetus, can we morally bypass her right to autonomy?

ADVOCACY

The mother and fetus can be equally deserving of advocacy, safe treatment, and beneficence.

“Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute...judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy” (Proverbs 31:8-9).