

UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI
INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MIDWIFERY PROGRAMME

FINAL EXAMINATION: OCTOBER 2021

COURSE TITLE: BIOETHICS

COURSE CODE: MWF634

TIME ALLOCATED: 3 HOURS

MARKS ALLOCATED: 100

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. ANSWER QUESTION 1 AND ANY OTHER THREE QUESTIONS OF YOUR CHOICE
2. USE THE PROVIDED ANSWER BOOKLET FOR ALL YOUR ANSWERS
3. START ALL QUESTIONS ON A NEW PAGE
4. USE BULLETS TO EXPRESS EACH POINT IN YOUR RESPONSES (DO NOT INVENT YOUR OWN NUMBERING)
5. CHECK THAT YOUR QUESTION PAPER HAS 4 PRINTED PAGES
6. DO NOT OPEN THE QUESTION PAPER UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GRANTED BY THE CHIEF INVIGILATOR

QUESTION 1 (COMPULSORY)

The COVID-19 pandemic has put health care professionals, including midwives against various ethical challenges. Discuss how COVID-19 has presented ethical challenges/dilemmas for midwives under the following headings:

1.1 Beneficence and nonmaleficence imperatives for midwives [8]

1.2 Women's autonomy [7]

A very sick mother of a 3-days-old neonate has just tested positive to COVID-19. Her family is very concerned about her prognosis and the risk of her baby getting infected. Thus, in this situation, the midwife has a moral duty to the mother, her baby, and to the family.

1.3 Contrast how an advanced midwife who decides to apply the traditional moral theories (i.e. theories of duty/obligation) would approach this case versus one who decides to apply the ethics of care theory. [10]

[Total: 25 marks]

QUESTION 2

Simo is a 10-year old boy with cerebral palsy, emaciated and bedridden, hooked to feeding tubes and monitors in a pediatric intensive care unit at the Manzini Clinic. His body is twisted in pain that is almost impossible to control; his days are marked by one agonizing surgical operation after another; locked in the mental life of an infant, and acknowledged by all the experts to be without hope. His anguished parents, wanting desperately to end his suffering, beg the midwife working in the unit to give Simo a lethal injection.

3.1 Identify the ethical dilemma in the above scenario [2]

3.2 Applying the approaches of the utilitarian theory, discuss what the midwife should do in this situation? [23]

[Total: 25 marks]

QUESTION 3

Mrs. B. Myeni, an 80-year-old hopelessly ill patient admitted in one of the Roman Catholic Palliative care centers in the Manzini region, is in continuous, unbearable pain and begs to be put out of her misery (either by giving a lethal injection or ending all ordinary life sustaining measures).

3.1 Applying the doctrine of double effect, is it morally/ethically permissible to grant her request? Give three reasons for your answer. [5]

3.2 Using the four tests of the natural law theory that an action must pass to be judged morally permissible, discuss whether assisting Mrs. Myeni to end her life would be permissible. [16]

3.3 From a virtue ethicist's view, can the act of ending Mrs. Myeni's agony be regarded as virtuous? Justify your answer [4]

[Total: 25 marks]

QUESTION 4

Section 15 (5) of the 2005 Eswatini Constitution outlaws abortion all together, except only in limited circumstances where continued pregnancy will endanger the life or mental health of the woman or the child, or where the pregnancy has resulted from rape or incest, or unlawful sexual intercourse with a mentally retarded female. However, a 25 years-old unmarried primigravid woman has been accepted to pursue a Master's degree in Asia, and one of her scholarship conditions is that she should not be pregnant at the time of enrollment. She approaches an obstetrician working at a local mission hospital to help her with the abortion. However, the obstetrician declines. From a principlism theory perspective, discuss why granting abortion access to the woman would have been morally/ethically acceptable and/or morally/ethically good. [25]

[Total: 25 marks]

QUESTION 5

Read the following excerpt from the BMJ (2021);373:n1317 and answer the question that follows:

By Owen Dyer

A Virginia obstetrician has been sentenced to 59 years in prison for performing unnecessary operations, including removing ovaries and performing hysterectomies without women's knowledge....

The court heard more than 60 victim impact statements, and 25 former patients testified at the trial. One recounted how Perwaiz (the obstetrician) had told her that "onset of cancer was imminent" and that she needed a hysterectomy. She objected, consenting instead to have her ovaries removed. When she awoke from surgery, she learnt that she had undergone a hysterectomy and that Perwaiz had perforated her bladder. She developed sepsis and was kept in hospital for six days. Later examination of her medical records showed no evidence of precancerous cells...

The FBI began investigating him in 2018, after a hospital employee alerted them to the possibility that he might be performing unnecessary surgery in order to bill for it. Several nurses told the court that they had complained about the obstetrician repeatedly to superiors. He "routinely used the C-word to scare patients into having surgery," testified one nurse. Hospital staff struggled to keep up as he ran from procedure to procedure, the court heard. His patients often seemed unaware of what procedure they were undergoing, nurses testified, and Perwaiz sometimes told staff that the women were present for their "annual cleanouts..." Perwaiz has filed for appeal in a higher court.

Assuming that the obstetrician's lawyer will argue that all his patients validly consented to the procedures, discuss the arguments that the obstetrician's lawyer will have to raise to convince the court that consent process was informed and valid. [25]

[Total: 25 marks]