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**PATIENT AUTONOMY IN MODERN MEDICAL ETHICS**

Patient autonomy is an important issue in modern medicine and medical ethics. Especially, due to the increase in the variety of modern day treatment methods autonomy has garnered more attention in the past few years. What is patient autonomy? The notion of autonomy in biomedical ethics there is a common core understanding of the meaning of this notion. According to this idea, autonomy means self-government.

To the patient this means, the freedom to choose the methods in which the healthcare can be provided or to even refuse treatment altogether.

To the doctor this is not just a way to keep his professional work in open and to make sure that his medical liabilities are kept at null or minimal, but also a way for the healthcare provider to understand the psyche of the patient and to have a productive treatment method that does not restrict the rights of the patient. Autonomy is especially important in the factor of the patient’s lifestyle after the treatment period is over. Patients reserve the right to choose procedures that are more comfortable to them despite the interests of the medical professional.

The problem arises with the questions. How much autonomy is too much? In case the patient is unable to make decisions and has no close contacts to make his/ her decisions, how much control over the patient’s situation can a healthcare provider have? What if a patient adamantly refuses to take critical treatment? To explain these issues here is a hypothetical example: A woman is in ER with stomach pain. She is diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm. The doctors inform her that surgery is the only option and that should the aneurysm burst, she would be dead in a few minutes. The woman is a dancer; she fears that the surgery will leave a scar that will badly affect her work and her vanity; so, she refuses any surgical treatment. Even after much discussion, she strongly refuses surgery. Feeling that the woman is not in her correct state of mind and knowing that time is short, the surgeons decide to perform the surgery without consent. They anesthetize her and surgically repair the aneurysm. She survives, and sues the hospital for millions of dollars. Do you believe that the physician's actions can be justified in any way? What would you do if you were one of the doctors? These are important ethical questions that should be discussed by doctors and brought to more attention.