**Applying the Four Principle of Biomedical ethics in Medical Practice**

**Part 1: Chart**

Principlism refers to the four bioethics principles guiding the practice of healthcare professionals (Bhanji, 2018). These principles are beneficence, autonomy, justice, and nonmaleficence. The principle of autonomy gives the patient the freedom to participate in making decisions about his or her treatment plan. The beneficence principle demands clinicians to provide treatment that benefits the patient while the justice principle emphasizes respect for patient rights during care provision. The nonmaleficence principle is to avoid harming the patients (Povar et al. 2016). The physician must consider the four bioethics principles in dealing and providing care to James.

The first part of this analysis formalizes the four principles of biomedical ethics based on the four-box approaches. Data from 'Healing and Autonomy case study' is organized per relevant biomedical ethics principles. Healing and autonomy case involves a minor and parents decides on his care plan.

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| **Patient preference** | **Contextual Features** |
| **Autonomy Principle**   * The physician has exercised this principle by allowing parents to practice their faith by taking James home for spiritual healing to restore his health * The doctor respected the decision by James parents to forego suggested instant dialysis in favour of religious healing | **Justice and Fairness Principle**   * The patient has a right to health care regardless of their background, and the physicians provided this by offering care to James. * Patients also have a right to practice their faith, which was guaranteed by the physician |
| **Medical Indicators:** | **Quality of life** |
| **Beneficence and nonmaleficence**   * The doctor places James on dialysis upon return two days later to restore his condition which had deteriorated due to fluid build and elevated blood pressure * The nephrologist suggests Samuel as an ideal kidney donor that will be compatible with James tissue following a series of tissue mismatch for the benefit of James, his twin brother and parents. | **Beneficence, nonmaleficence**   * The physician executed nonmaleficence principle by suggesting immediate dialysis to relieve the build-up of fluids and elevated blood pressure of the patient but was turned down by his parents who preferred religious healing instead   **Autonomy**   * There was spiritual harm to the patient- James condition deteriorated yet could have been avoided if the parents had agreed to instant dialysis as suggested by the physician. |

**Conclusion**

The physician exercised his obligation to respect the autonomy of the patients, and also avoid harm by providing medical benefit to James. Informed by the provision of law and community practice, he gave priority to the autonomy principle against other duties. However, failing to conduct immediate dialysis led to spiritual harm. However, since James was a minor and below ten years, the legal precedence overrides the wishes of parents not to permit life-saving dialysis. According to McCormick (2008), for the vulnerable minor, the principle of avoiding harm and provision of medical benefit to restore James to good health and life, ought to have been given precedence over respect for autonomy by the parents.

**Part 2: Evaluation**

The biblical and theological reflection play an important role in deciding the best bioethics principle for Christian in the event of conflicts between medical and Christian ethical principles. While there is no definite Christian perspective of health condition is in place, it is possible to determine specific features that contribute to the central view of Christians. The right to life protection is a core aspect in Christian teachings and involves promoting highest quality of life in whatever circumstances. Affirming life is the most important principle, and the basic one can offer. In view of the Christian worldview, the principle of beneficence is the most pressing in the healing and autonomy care because it is the appropriate way of protecting and affirming the life of James.

In this case, James parents later realized that his health continues to deteriorate despite their faith in God, forcing them to return for the medication in the hospital. For the need to protect life, it was necessary to seek medical benefit for their son. However, this principle was initially challenged by the respect for autonomy, which resulted in spiritual harm. For instance, Mike started to question his faith in God as a possible cause of James' worsening health condition. Therefore, permission or agent's consent is needed before the medical benefit can be provided to the patient. As noted, the principle of autonomy failed to generate expected healing prompting the physician to provide medical benefit to improve the health condition of James. It is further observed that had this principle been applied as earlier suggested by the physician, James condition would have been contained and would not have required a kidney transplant to restore his health.

All the four principles of medical ethics are critical in providing care consistent with the biblical Christian worldview. Ranking the four bioethics principle per the Christian worldview may vary depending on the beliefs, principle and practices as well as the personal experience with life. Based on Christian worldview, autonomy is ranked first, followed by nonmaleficence, beneficence, and justice as the last ranked principle.

Autonomy means respecting the choice of patients in their care. Respect for free will is an essential theme in the bible as God interacts with people (Gen. 2:16-17) Therefore, people have the freedom even to make unwise decisions but must be ready to live with the consequences of their choices. However, the principle gets complicated if the patient involved in not competent to decide on their care or when it conflicts with other principles or even the autonomy of others. However, this principle requires that should there be a conflict with other bioethics principles, such as refusing to take life-saving dialysis for James, the patient must be fully informed of their decisions.

Non-maleficence and beneficence principles are interlinked and are critical in protecting the lives of humans. It is essential to ensure that the supposed medical treatment is safe and will not harm the patient before it is offered. Therefore, nonmaleficence precedes the beneficence in line with the Christian principle of affirming life. Finally, the principle of justice is ranked last, according to the Christian worldview. The principle demand that for similar cases, the same level and quality of care regardless of race, social and economic status and religion, among others. The bible commands Christian to act justly and with love and mercy (Micah. 6: 8). The Scripture describes God as 'just' and Christian should emulate their creator.

**Conclusion**

All the four principles of medical ethics are critical in providing care consistent with the biblical Christian worldview. For health professionals, biblical reflection plays a vital role in deciding the best bioethics principle for Christians in the event of conflicts between medical and Christian ethical principles. The principlism is a representation of a consensus opinion of right and is consistent with most ethical theory.

References

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