

Introduction

Many Voices: Human Values in Healthcare Ethics

In an age of "ethics with everything," it may come as something of a surprise that there should be a need for a new reader on healthcare ethics and human values. In fact, this book is intended as a counterpoint (some might see it as a challenge!) to the growing legalism in many areas of bioethics. This quasi-legal ethics, as we will call it, is based on and gives expression to particular values (such as autonomy of patient choice). As such, quasi-legal ethics has been, and remains, an important part of bioethics' response to the ethical challenges of technological advance in medicine. We will give a number of examples of the importance of quasi-legal ethics later in this Introduction. What is needed now, though, we will argue, is to draw together and to strengthen those aspects of bioethics which, in contrast to quasi-legal ethics, make central not particular values, but *diversity* of values.

It is the diversity of human values operative throughout healthcare that this book aims to illustrate. Hence the majority of contributions – canonical, newly commissioned, and first-hand narratives – are organized not according to "issues," but according to the main stages of

the clinical encounter: they run from Staying Well (Part II), through Falling Ill (Part III), First Contact (Part IV), and Deciding What the Problem Is (Part V), to Negotiating a Treatment Plan (Part VI); and from there to Continuing Contact, either Getting Well (Part VII), or Chronic Illness, Disability, Deformity, Remission, and Relapse (Part VIII), and, in our final Section, to Dying (Part IX).

In contrast to quasi-legal ethics, we will use the term "healthcare ethics" to cover the diverse strands of scholarship and practice in bioethics, which, increasingly, start from and seek to make central the rich diversity of human values.¹ Healthcare ethics, understood in this way, and quasi-legal ethics are not sharply distinct. They represent poles of bioethical thinking, which, in theory and in practice, are woven together in varying proportions. There are, though, a number of important differences between them, which, if both are to make their proper contributions to a balanced bioethics, it is important to keep clearly in mind.

In this Introduction, therefore, we set the contributions to this book in context by highlighting some of the key differences between

