

## **Ethical dilemmas in the care of cancer patients near the end of life**

*ABSTRACT* By definition, an ethical dilemma involves the need to choose from among two or more morally acceptable options or between equally unacceptable courses of action, when one choice prevents selection of the other. Advances in medicine, increasing economic stress, rise of patient self-determination and differing values between healthcare workers and patients are among the many factors contributing to the frequency and complexity of ethical issues in healthcare. In the cancer patient near the end of life, common ethical dilemmas include those dealing with artificial nutrition and hydration, truth-telling and disagreements over management plans. It would stand the clinician in good stead to be aware of these issues and have an approach toward dealing with such problems. In addition, organizations have a responsibility to ensure that systems are in place to minimize its occurrence and ensure that staff is supported through the process of resolving dilemmas and conflicts that may arise.

Keywords: cancer, conflicts, end-of-life care, ethical dilemmas