

CASE A

Death with Dignity¹

Charlie Gard, a child born in the UK in the fall of 2016, was diagnosed with an extremely rare genetic condition called mitochondrial DNA depletion syndrome. In this condition, the individual lacks the essential building blocks of DNA, depriving cells of energy and profoundly impairing normal growth and development. Parts of the body most affected are the muscles, liver, and brain. The condition left Charlie unable to move, see, hear, speak, cry, or swallow and dependent upon invasive life support.

The UK doctors wished to declare the child brain dead (i.e., clinically and legally dead) and remove him from life support. His parents refused and asked the European Court of Human Rights to grant them permission to bring Charlie to the United States where doctors at New York's Columbia University Medical Center offered to conduct an experimental treatment, nucleoside bypass therapy.

A High Court judge ruled against the trip to America stating the child should be able to "die with dignity." Charlie's parents appealed the decision declaring that the hospital was holding their child "prisoner" and that he was receiving "inhuman" care and treatment. Against the wishes of his parents, the UK High Court and other governing authorities ruled in opposition. Charlie was removed from life support in July 2017 and is now deceased.

Treatment for this condition is basically non-existent. The rarity of the disease means very few physicians are familiar with the condition or know of experimental interventions which may help the child. The US doctors stated the experimental treatment would have taken them into uncharted territory."

*What is the value? What is the issue?

Person perspective.

¹ Robert Boyd Skipper, et. al. "Death with Dignity" in *Cases for the Twenty-Second Intercollegiate Ethics Bowl National Championship*. Association for Practical and Professional Ethics (2018), <http://appe-ethics.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/2018-National-IEB-Cases.pdf>

Paper Prompt:

CASE A: Death with Dignity

CASE B: Syrian Refugees

Pick ONE of these cases to analyze and evaluate. First, analyze this case using the moral theory (deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics or natural law) that you think provides *the best resolution*. Begin by considering the questions what is important? What is "at stake"? Then, in light of the theory you are using, give an argument about what should be done in this case. In your analysis, be sure to provide and defend an answer to the question: What is morally appropriate or morally required in this case (according to the theory you've used)? Raise one objection to your preferred moral theory's way of resolving the case and provide a response to this objection consistent with your preferred theory.

Length and formatting: 4-5 pages, standard formatting (i.e., double-spaced, Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins). **You must cite your sources and provide a bibliography.** You should use the citation system employed in your profession/discipline. For health sciences, this is usually APA. If your discipline does not have a preferred citation system or you do not know it, use Chicago Manual of Style, Documentation Style II: Author-Date Reference style. See below for guidelines.

Style guidelines: Imagine that you are writing for a peer, not for the professor. This person is intelligent and educated, but she is not a part of our class. In your analysis, you may presume that your reader has read the case study, but you should refer explicitly to the details of the case when needed in order to make your argument. Do not simply allude to the case; explain the details where needed to build your argument. See the first paper handout for advice on using the first-person ("I").

Peer-review Process: This paper is due in two parts. In the first part, you will submit a complete draft to a partner for peer-review. Reading your partner's paper and giving them high-quality feedback is worth 10% of your paper grade. In the second part, you will submit the final, revised version of your paper. This will be worth 90% of your paper grade.

Due Dates:

- April 24: The first draft will be due to Canvas prior to class and in HARD COPY in class. Assignment Folder: "Paper #2 Draft"
- April 26: Return feedback to your partner in class along with the hard-copy of your partner's paper
- April 26 by 11:59pm: **E-mail** the completed version of the peer-review feedback rubric to BOTH: Dr. Harvey and your partner. (8 pts)
- May 1 by 11:59pm: Submit the final version of the paper to Assignment Folder "Paper #2 Final Version." (90 pts)
- May 1 by 11:59pm: Submit Survey on Peer-Review to Canvas; Assignment Folder "Survey on Peer-Review" (2 pts)

Suggested Outline of the Paper

Section 1: Introduction and Thesis. Begin with an introduction that “hooks” your reader and introduces them to the topic you will be discussing. Clearly state the conclusion you wish to defend. This is your thesis.

Section 2: Introduce the basic principles of the moral theory that you will be applying to your chosen case study.

Section 3: Analyze the case using the moral theory (deontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics or natural law) that you think resolves the case the best.

Section 4: Raise an objection to the previous moral analysis. What are possible objections to or concerns about resolving the case in this way? Is this a fully adequate way of understanding and resolving the situation? Why or why not?

[Section 4 Caution: do not raise an objection about the way you’ve applied the theory to the case; the objection should come from the perspective of one of the other theories. For example, a Kantian analysis will tend to privilege duties and rights and disregard consequences. But a utilitarian believes the consequences matter, so a utilitarian might object that there are some bad consequences that have been ignored.]

Section 5: From the perspective of the theory that you used to analyze the case, give a response to the objection(s) raised.

Section 6: Conclusion. Remind the reader of the thesis and what they have learned and briefly recap the argument.

Include a bibliography with the sources you have cited in your paper. You must cite your sources, even if you only use one.

- Guidance on APA (American Psychological Association) Style can be found here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- Guidance on Chicago Style can be found here: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html : click: ‘Go to Author-date Style’

Additional Tips for Success

1) Kai Nielsen’s essay “A Defense of Utilitarianism” would be a good essay to model your paper on. If you recall, Nielsen analyzes two classical cases. He explains how the utilitarian would resolve the cases. He introduces some common objections to the utilitarian way of resolving the cases and then he gives a defense of why the utilitarian way of resolving the case is the best way, despite the objections.

2) In your reply to objections, be careful to reason consistently from the point of view of the theory you are defending. For example, be careful not to appeal to consequentialist reasons to defend a deontological solution.
