

The Importance and Protection of the Conscience of Physician in the Physician-Patient Relationship

In democratic countries all over the world, the protection of the conscience of health workers represents a very relevant problem. Especially the controversial but legal procedures, such as abortion or, in some countries, euthanasia, are often refused by health workers on the basis of their conscience. The society faces a difficult dilemma of balancing the interests of physicians, patients, and health care systems.

The thesis approaches the problem primarily from the perspective of Catholic moral theology in the frame of a predominantly secular environment of the contemporary Euro-American civilisation. There are analysed the concept of conscience, the basic principles of moral reasoning, virtue ethics and its importance for modern medicine and, finally, the concept of conscientious objection as a model example of the protection of health worker's conscience. The above mentioned particular topics serve as a basis for the evaluation of the importance of the conscience of health worker and the proposal of possible solutions to the related dilemmas.