



“More care, less medicine: epistemic risk and non-epistemic values at the end of life”

Dr Lotte Elton
Winner of the Sydney Selwyn

Summary:

The practice of modern medicine has become increasingly defensive: we appear to place more value on minimising the possibility that we fail to notice or cure illness, rather than the risk that medical investigations and treatments inflict unintentional harm. This is particularly pertinent in end of life care: there has been longstanding debate and controversy about when and whether to stop active medical treatment in those who are dying.

In this talk, I will explain how the concept of epistemic risk underpins the decisions we make about the care of dying patients, and consider how we manage epistemic risk with recourse to our non-epistemic values around dying. I will argue that these non-epistemic values may lead us to under-diagnose dying and over-treat death, but that the values espoused by palliative care might offer a new way to resolve epistemic risk at the end of life.

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“Surveillance, social contract, and 21st Century healthcare?”

Dr Deniz Kaya  
Highly Commended, Sydney Selwyn

Summary:

Proposals to use audio-visual surveillance in healthcare settings such as mental health wards, emergency services and theatres blurs the distinction between public and clinical spaces. Surveillance forces a re-negotiation of the social contract between society and healthcare. Instead of unspoken agreement based upon mutual expectation and trust, the contract is now vocal and enforced by Hobbesian authority. The logical and empirical slide towards panoptic totality may yield benefits in security and efficiency. This needs to be balanced with the ramifications on the healthcare-patient relationship surrounding consent, power and trust.