

Key Topics in Applied Ethics

Bio-medical Ethics

What is a person?

- *Do all humans share the same moral status?*
- *Fetus? Comatose or vegetative?*
- *How do we evaluate the worth of a life?*
- *Worthwhile/Valuable life (Utilitarian)*
- *Autonomous life (Deontological)*
- *Flourishing life (Virtue)*

Duties and Rights

- *Does everyone have a right to life?*
- *Kantian and Utilitarian definitions: ends and means*
- *What about when rights conflict?*

Acts and Omissions

- *Letting die or acting to kill?*
- *Virtue approach: doctors' responsibility*

Triage

- *How to we evaluate needs?*
- *Utilitarian calculus?*
- *Is there another way?*

Distribution of Wealth

What is the problem?

- *Extreme poverty, disease, lack of dignity*
- *Question of justice - needs definition*
- *Is NOT acting a moral failure?*

Extent of Care

- *Charity begins at home*
- *Charity as supererogatory act*
- *How far does our concern go?*
- *How to resolve conflicts of interest?*

Normative responses

- *Utilitarian: Singer's puddle, cost/benefit analysis of charity*
- *Kant: Duty of care, people as ends*
- *Virtue: Compassion, generosity, part of a human community*

Distribution of Resources

- *Equality? Is that justice?*
- *According to need? Utilitarian values*
- *According to desserts? What right do we have to earn/inherit?*

The Environment

Do natural objects have a moral status?

- *Are humans our only moral concern?*
- *Is it enough to protect the environment only for human ends?*
- *Are animals worthy of moral concern?*
- *Are humans worth more than animals? animals than plants? plants than rocks?*
- *The 'last man' argument.*

Instrumental and intrinsic value

- *Does the environment have intrinsic value?*
- *Should we be emotionally attached to non-humans?*
- *Does it matter if a species becomes extinct? Why?*

Conflict of values

- *Utilitarian cost/benefit analysis*
- *Do we have a duty to animals or nature?*
- *Virtues: wonder, responsibility*
- *Human-centred v. Life-centred*