



## 6th International Conference on Clinical Ethics Consultation

May 11-14, 2010 ♦ Portland Art Museum ♦ Portland, Oregon, USA

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### Abstract Submission Form – Papers

Please contact John Tuohey at [ethics@providence.org](mailto:ethics@providence.org) with any questions.

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Proposed title of paper: Family Narratives in Clinical Ethics Consultation

Abstract with 3 clearly stated objectives in 250 words:

This paper explores the role of family narratives in clinical ethics consultation. Even as many in the medical profession cautiously accept patient autonomy as the guiding mantra, the role of family in medical decision making remains ambiguous. While professionals understand their prima facie duty to abide by patients' regarding goals of care, given that the latter are most familiar with their values and have to live with the consequences of their decisions, care providers often doubt the insight or intention of family members who hold divergent opinions from the professionals.

Building on the feminist conception of the relational self and examining the context of contemporary institutional medicine, this paper argues that we need to take family narratives seriously. In situations of disagreement, family members are often prematurely dismissed as being irrational or too emotional. Using various case examples, this paper argues that attention to family narratives in such distressing situations can often help us to not only understand the patients' overall identity and value system, but also recognize institutional and systemic inadequacies that drive families' concern with caregivers' recommendation. The paper ends with some suggestions of how clinical ethicists can solicit meaningful narratives that may help medical teams to have a fuller view of various contextual factors contributing to the patient's and family's experience.

Objectives:

1. Examine the ambiguous role of family involvement in medical decision making.
2. Facilitate understanding of the moral significance of family narratives in promoting patients' relational identity in contemporary institutional medicine.

3. Explore the art of utilizing family narratives in resolving ethical conflicts in decision making.

If you have or will publish on this topic, please cite reference:

- "They Just Don't Get It!" When Family Disagrees with Expert Opinion. Journal of Medical Ethics 35(8) (August 2009), 497-501.

- Using Family Members as Interpreters in the Clinical Setting. The Journal of Clinical Ethics 19(3) (Fall 2008), 223-233.

- Relational Autonomy or Undue Pressure? Family's Role in Medical Decision-Making. Scandinavian Journal of Caring Sciences 22 (March 2008), 128-135.

Are you planning to or will you be willing to submit a poster along with your paper?

Yes     No