A PROPOSAL OF A COMMON FIELD OF DISCUSSION BETWEEN DIFFERENT PROTOTYPES OF ETHICAL THINKING:

HIPPOCRATISM, AUTONOMY, UTILITARIANISM AND CONFUCIANISM

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Aim of the presentation was to propose a common field of discussion between discourses from different ethical standpoints by clarifying the prototypes of ethical thinking.

Hippocratic Oath, which has long been a prevailing principle followed by medical practitioners, emphasizes on the noble obligation for the best practice that should precede anything other than the benefit of patient. However, several requirements of modern medical ethics, such as autonomy of patient and utilitarianism, challenge the traditional principle. The decisive power of the will of patient replaced that of doctor, while the utilitarian point of view has become important since medical practice is recognized as a fruit of social and economic resources. In the aging society of our era, one of the most prominent settings in which we encounter such ethical conflicts is that of dementia care. We should also be aware of hidden “conflict of interest” that underlies between patients and caregivers, although we usually think that we practice simply for the benefit of patients. Moreover, the introduction of modern public care system may conflict with the traditional way of thinking such as Confucianism in eastern Asia.

The presentation outlines popular ethical dilemmas that we may face in the daily practice of dementia care, and delineates the points of conflict brought about by several ethical principles including Hippocratism, autonomy, utilitarianism and Confucianism.