



EDITORIAL

Three of the articles in this issue are concerned with attitudes. Ethics is perhaps shifting from the framework of principles, such as maleficence and beneficence, to that of the more or less regular patterns of predisposition and reaction we find among the stakeholders in health care settings. This goes along with a shift towards a greater focus on specialist subjects that are addressed from within a specialist field. Thus the articles that are concerned with attitudes specialize in considering student nurses and homeless clients (Miklos Zrinyi and Zoltan Balogh), euthanasia (Charlotte Verpoort and colleagues), and maintaining patient privacy in hospitals (Nili Tabak and Meirave Ozon).

The last mentioned article also shares the topic of privacy with that of Terry Deshefy-Longhi and her co-authors. These two articles have not clearly defined what Woogara¹ found in his study, namely that privacy is a complex issue made up of different components, in particular privacy of the person and privacy of information. The attitude needing to be developed among health care staff is not only one of respect for the person, but also of managing complex personal and social rights.

This topic is close to the article by Amina Rashad and her colleagues, who tackle the difficult subject of informed consent when the requirements do not fit the circumstances. Professional attitudes are absorbed fairly quickly by student nurses in the course of their education and workplace socialization. Once absorbed, these attitudes become quite entrenched and difficult to change later on. We are hardly aware of the influence our attitudes have on others; role models – including those who are authors of articles – therefore play a vital role in moulding the nursing profession generally.

Although their approach and genre are altogether different, Janie Butt and Karen Rich's article about the dependence and independence of all persons concerned with those who suffer from Alzheimer's disease points to the attitudes needed for coping with very specialist care. All caring is about encouraging human flourishing. That will always manifest itself in the attitudes we hold. The better we can understand the basis of our attitudes, the better we can understand the education needed for students of the health care professions.

Two reports complement this issue in ways that further enhance some of the subjects covered by the articles.

Verena Tschudin

Reference

¹ Woogara J. Human rights and patients' privacy in UK hospitals. *Nurs Ethics* 2001; **8**: 234–46.