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Gallagher and Herberts' "Faith and ethics in health and social care: Improving practice through understanding diverse perspectives" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Gallagher, A. & Herbert, C. (Eds). (2019). *Faith and ethics in health and social care: Improving practice through understanding diverse perspectives*. Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers. 192 pp. \$27.95. ISBN 9781785925894

After a brief introduction to different ethical approaches in the opening chapter, subsequent chapters give a scholarly overview of ten world faiths with a rudimentary discussion and reflection on ethics in healthcare pertaining to each of them. There is a different author for each chapter who is an expert and upholder of the faith in question, often either chaplains or medical care professionals themselves. The ten faiths covered in this book are: Bahá'í, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Humanism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, and Sikhism.

The editors, Ann Gallagher (Professor of Ethics and Care, University of Surrey) and Bishop Christopher Herbert (Visiting Professor of Christian Ethics, University of Surrey), aim to encourage healthcare professionals and religious individuals involved in healthcare settings to consider the implications of worldviews that are different than their own in order to develop better care systems for a diverse patient population. The editors achieved this by allowing the practice examples to refer to real patient experiences, enabling the reader to empathize with all those involved.

This title explores a wide range of world faiths, taking care to cover the top faiths mentioned in the UK census. Each chapter gives a general overview of the understanding of this faith in today's society, highlighting the points which most directly influence followers' ideas about health and care. In this sense, the book thoroughly covers religions that one might come across when delivering health care. However, there is less extensive coverage of material with regards to potential ethical dilemmas that one might experience with each faith. While each chapter delivers a new practice example, the example does not always demonstrate an ethical dilemma. Instead, the authors illustrate what good health care looks like if carried out according to the patient's faith beliefs, helping the reader to see why certain decisions might be made. In this way, the book offers helpful, practical guidance to caregivers and health professionals without offering an extensive look at possible situations and/or debating the correct way to offer care. Additionally, each author gives vague recommendations about how to deliver better care systems mostly concluding that more communication and sensitivity are required. However, sometimes the reader is directed to specific organizations that can help implement changes.

This book would be most relevant to schools with healthcare programs and peripherally relevant to more general ethics courses as it is meant to be reflective and practical as opposed to extensively argumentative. The book is well documented, citing scholarly and other relevant sources such as websites for organizations mentioned throughout. These sources are at the end of each chapter and sometimes include additional suggested resources for further reading.

Reviewer

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