

Medical Ethical Dilemmas in Anaesthesia

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There are times in our practice as Clinical Anaesthetists when we face complex ethical decisions. Sometimes we have the luxury of time to seek advice from a range of viewpoints; work colleagues, heads of departments, other clinicians, family and friends and more formally ethicists or ethic committees. At other times, we must make immediate decisions on a complex problem, bringing to bear our expertise and knowledge. It may be difficult to even identify the ethical question at the heart of a clinical decision.

For this session we canvassed Australasian anaesthetists to find a range of real-life ethical issues that anaesthetists face. We then assembled a panel of experts to discuss these complex ethical issues from different viewpoints. Often there may be no right decision, but a range of perspectives.

The panel is made up of people whose wide-ranging expertise will shed light on the issues involved in decision-making. The panel is:

Harry Waalkens QC
Assoc Prof Tim Dare
Charles Bradfield
David Smyth
Martin MacFarlane

Medico-legal perspective
Medical ethics / Philosophy
Anaesthetist / Clinical Director
Cardiologist / General medicine
Neurosurgeon / Surgery

Cases will be presented for discussion which we hope will generate strong opinion from the floor as well.