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End of Life Care

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Please renew your Asian Bioethics Association subscriptions for 2012, and submit abstracts to the 13th Asian Bioethics Conference, 27-31 August 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Death with dignity is impossible in contemporary Japan: Considering patient peace of mind in end-of-life care

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Abstract

Currently in Japan, it is extremely difficult to realize the basic wish of protecting personal dignity at the end of life. A patient's right to refuse life-sustaining treatment has not been substantially warranted, and advance directives have not been legally enforceable. Unfortunately, it is not until the patient is moribund that all concerned parties start to deliberate on whether or not death with dignity should be pursued. Medical intervention is often perceived as a worthwhile goal to not only preserve life, but also provide psychological benefit to the family, regardless of its effect on the patient. To feel they are doing something, family members tend to act against the imperative “Do not inflict on others what you would not wish done to you,” and permit extraordinary measures they would not want themselves. Another complication in

Editorial Note: End of Life Care

The first three issues of *EJAIB* for 2012 include papers from the Fifth UNESCO-Kumamoto University Bioethics Roundtable, held 3-5 December 2011 in Japan. The March issue focuses on papers on end of life care and advance directives. There are also some papers submitted to *EJAIB* on related topics, and a couple of other papers on medical ethics issues including H1N1 policy in Japan, and surrogacy tourism and HIV in India.

The authors describe different cultural perspectives that affect bioethical decision making, from individual beliefs and experiences to policy and law, and explore ways that ethical principles can be applied to decision making regarding the end of life care and bioethics in Japan, Hong Kong, Turkey and Iran.

- Darryl Macer