

9781107039216 STERCKX – CONTINUOUS SEDATION AT THE END OF LIFE C M Y K

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Bioethics and Law

Continuous sedation until death (sometimes referred to as terminal sedation or palliative sedation) is an increasingly common practice in end-of-life care. However, it raises numerous medical, ethical, emotional and legal concerns, such as reducing or removing of consciousness (and thus potentially causing 'subjective death'), the withholding of artificial nutrition and hydration, the proportionality of the sedation to the symptoms, its adequacy in actually relieving symptoms rather than simply giving onlookers the impression that the patient is undergoing a painless 'natural' death, and the perception that it may be functionally equivalent to euthanasia.

This book brings together contributions from clinicians, ethicists, lawyers and social scientists, and discusses guidelines as well as clinical, emotional and legal aspects of the practice. The chapters shine a critical spotlight on areas of concern and on the validity of the justifications given for the practice, including in particular the doctrine of double effect.

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'By helping us to see that continuous sedation at the end of life needs to be (and how it can be) better understood, monitored and regulated, this book has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the improvement of care of the dying across the globe.'  
Jocelyn Downie, Professor of Health Law, Dalhousie University, Canada

'Mentors the reader to be mindful of all aspects of palliative sedation from the practical aspects, to the ethical dilemmas and the legal frameworks. A must-read for all professionals working in or researching palliative care.'  
Professor Sheila Payne, President of the European Association for Palliative Care

'The combining of perspectives from clinicians and academics is particularly valuable and the editorial introduction provides a masterful summary of the issues involved. This book is destined to be a classic contribution to clinical ethics.'  
Professor Clive Seale, Professor of Sociology, Brunel University, London.

'An in-depth, comprehensive and balanced understanding of the clinical and ethical issues surrounding continuous sedation at the end of life. The authors' contributions are extremely helpful in teasing apart and identifying the critical issues.'  
Professor Stuart Youngner, Department of Bioethics, Case Western Reserve University, USA

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Ethical, Clinical and Legal Perspectives

Edited by Sigrid Sterckx, Kasper Raus and Freddy Mortier

Sterckx, Raus and Mortier

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