

In recent years, the triumph of autonomy has made paternalist interventions increasingly problematic. The value of a patient's right to self-determination and the practice of informed consent are considered supremely important in present-day health care ethics. In general, the idea of doctor knows best has become more and more suspicious. This has left us with a situation in which paternalist medicine seems difficult to reconcile with respect for patient autonomy. This book offers a thorough reflection on the relationship between autonomy and paternalism, and argues that, from both theoretical and practical angles, the tension between these concepts is not as acute as it might seem. In long-term care, psychiatry, and care for the severely handicapped, the principle of respect for autonomy is particularly ill-suited. This, however, does not mean that such respect is totally irrelevant, but that it should take a different shape. Good care in those cases requires us to transcend the sharp dichotomy between autonomy and paternalism. In *Autonomy and Paternalism: Reflections on the Theory and Practice of Health Care* various acclaimed authors present their views on this interesting and extremely relevant debate.

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