

Preface

In virtually all the developed countries of the Western world, people are living longer and reproducing less. At the same time, costs for the care of the elderly and infirm continue to rise dramatically. Given these facts, it should come as no surprise that we are experiencing an ever-increasing concern with questions relating to the proper care and treatment of the aged. What responsibilities do societies have to their aging citizens? What duties, if any, do grown children owe their parents? What markers should we use to determine one's status as "elderly"? Does treatment of pain in aged patients present special medical and/or moral problems? How can the competing claims of autonomy and optimal medical care be reconciled for elderly persons who require assisted living? When, if ever, should severely demented patients be included in nontherapeutic clinical trials? These questions, and others of similar interest to those concerned with the proper treatment of the aged, are discussed in depth in the articles included in this text.

The essays in this volume of *Biomedical Ethics Reviews* fall loosely into two broad categories. The first four articles—those contributed by Sheila M. Neysmith, Allyson Robichaud, Jennifer Jackson, and Susan McCarthy—raise general questions concerning the propriety of Western society's current mechanisms for dealing with and treating elderly citizens. The remaining four articles—those by Simon Woods and Max Elstein, Marshall B. Kapp, Claudia Mills, and Sarah Clark Miller—grapple with problems that arise for medical personnel and family members who provide care for elderly persons.

Care of the Aged is the twentieth annual volume of *Biomedical Ethics Reviews*, a series of texts designed to review and update the literature on issues of central importance in bioethics today. For the convenience of our readers, each article in every volume of our series is prefaced by a short abstract describing that article's content. Each volume in the series is organized around a central theme; the theme for the next volume of *Biomedical Ethics Reviews* will be *Stem Cell Research*. We hope our readers will find this volume of *Biomedical*

Ethics Reviews to be both enjoyable and informative, and that they will look forward with anticipation to the publication of *Stem Cell Research*.

James M. Humber
Robert F. Almeder



<http://www.springer.com/978-1-58829-240-7>

Care of the Aged

Humber, J.M.; Almeder, R.F. (Eds.)

2003, IX, 200 p. 2 illus., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-58829-240-7

A product of Humana Press