

**BIOETHICS OF LIFE PROGRAMS:
TAKING MORAL PLURALISM IN CLINICAL SETTINGS SE**

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Objective: In the more and more globalized world the experience of moral pluralism (often related to, or based upon religious pluralism) has become a common issue which ethical importance is undeniable. The (potential) conflicts between patients' and therapeutic team's moral views and between moral beliefs of the particular member of this team are being resolved in the light of bioethical theories, among which principlism remains the mainstream approach to biomedical ethics. The question arises however whether this approach in itself, as being strictly bound to the specific and distinct American philosophical tradition, is to be considered the tool for, so called, 'moral imperialism'. Also architectures of principlism, in particular by elaborating the concept of common morality, defend the applicability of their theory to the pluralistic settings, it should be emphasized that the idea that some norms and standards of moral character are shared by all morally serious people in every culture has attracted criticism both from empirical as well as theoretical backgrounds. This paper aims at reconsidering principlism so that it would be more suitable for resolving moral dilemma in ethically pluralistic clinical settings.

Methods: Lakatos' sophisticated methodological falsification is used into two different ways, i.e. as the method (1) of the construction of the concept of 'life programs', and (2) to confront newly elaborated ethical theory with principlism. The reflection is limited to the norms related to the key issue in clinical ethics, i.e. respecting patient's autonomy.

Results: The concepts of 'common morality' and 'particular moralities' are interpreted (in the light of Lakatos' philosophy of sciences) as 'hard core' and 'protective belt' of life programs, appropriately. Accepting diversity of research programmes, Lakatos maintains the idea of the objectivity of truth. By analogy, the plurality of life programs does not pose into question the objectivity of moral values. The plurality of moral norms not only respects the objectivity of good but also can be seen as a condition sine qua non of such objectivity in the changing socio-historical context of doctor-patient relationship. **Conclusions:** The life program approach to bioethics, and clinical ethics in particular, can be seen as a form of widening of principlism. This new approach, being non-relativistic, is at the same time sensitive to moral pluralism experienced in everyday medical practice.

Keywords: principlism, common morality, pluralism, life programs