

# Bioethical dimensions of medical care in the elderly Dimensiones bioéticas del cuidado médico en el anciano

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This editorial examines the challenges posed by the current epidemiological transition towards ageing of societies, against the background of medical technologies: life-saving, life-sustaining and life-enhancing. Increased life expectancy among the elderly, compression of morbidity in the last year of life, cost containment in health-care delivery and humane treatment are elements of the dilemma facing modern medicine confronted to the aged. Technical success and medicalization of life are doomed to failure if the necessary reflection on what is proper, what is good and what is fair or just is not incorporated into everyday practice. These bioethical dimensions should be reformulated at the level of the individual professional, the institutional environment and the social milieu. Aside from gloomy predictions about the future, the challenges imposed by treatment of the elderly are seen as invigorating stimuli for the continuous improvement of medical care.