Int J Ethics Soc 2024; 6(2): 20-30

10.22034/ijethics.6.2.20

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF Ethics & Society

Review Article

Moral Challenges of Societies During Pandemics

Jack P. Anderias[1], Thomas Karlston[2*], John Pears[2]

1. Department of social and behavioral Sciences, Faculty of Public Health, Temple University, Philadelphia, USA.
2. Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, Colombia University, New York, USA.

Corresponding Author: Thomas Karlston, Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, Colombia University, New York, USA. E-mail: thomaskarl@gmail.com

Received 13 May 2024 **Accepted** 16 Jun 2024 **Online Published** 26 Jul 2024

Abstract

Introduction: The difference between an epidemic and a pandemic is not the severity of the disease, but the degree of its spread. Pandemics, unlike epidemics, cut across international borders. In this article, the moral challenges of societies during the occurrence of pandemic diseases (such as Covid-19, Sars, etc.) have been investigated.
Material and Methods: Conceptual analysis method is used in this article. Related keywords were used in the search of materials and 44 articles were collected from Sciencedirect, Pubmed, Proquest and Elsevier databases and their examples were used according to the purpose.
Conclusion: In this study, ethical challenges are divided into three categories: challenges related to sharing facilities, challenges related to providing or not providing medical services, and the challenge of how to react when faced with a controversial and possibly unethical situation. Then these challenges were examined from the perspective of ethical theories. The result of the analysis indicated that the philosophies of utilitarianism, virtuism, and truth-orientedness are not suitable for reasoning, justifying, and acting in difficult situations during pandemics. The philosophy of Justicialism, deontologism, and truth-orientedness are better, and with the help of a combination of the three mentioned theories, a model can be presented for three types of difficult situations in pandemic diseases.
Keywords: *Ethical challenges, Epidemic, Pandemic, Ethical theories.*

How to Cite: Anderias JP, Karlston T, Pears J. Moral challenges of societies during pandemics, Int J Ethics Soc. 2024;6(2):20-30. doi: 10.22034/ijethics.6.2.20

INTRODUCTION

The WHO defines pandemics, epidemics, and endemic diseases based on a disease's rate of spread. Thus, the difference between an epidemic and a pandemic isn't in the severity of the disease, but the degree to which it has spread.

A pandemic cuts across international boundaries, as opposed to regional epidemics. This wide geographical reach is what makes pandemics lead to large-scale social disruption, economic loss, and general hardship. It's important to note that a once-declared epidemic can progress into pandemic status. While an epidemic is large, it is also generally contained or expected in its spread, while a pandemic is international and out of control (1).

So far, mankind has experienced many pandemic diseases, from cholera, plague and anthrax to typhoid and tuberculosis and the like. Every time a new pandemic emerges, ethical questions resurface. In recent years, the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has put fundamental moral questions about pandemic diseases and their moral dilemmas back in the center of discussions.

Copyright © 2024 Anderias JP. et al. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License(http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

During the corona pandemic, some doctors and nurses did not show up at their workplace to save their lives (2). Some of the people in the market hoarded their alcohol and masks so that they could sell them at several times the price, and some, whose pandemic sense was sharper than their inhumanity, bought and hoarded these goods in bulk. The market of fake vaccines and endangering people's lives became hot and people tried to abuse the existing situation (3). Sometimes the name of Corona became a factor of social rejection and some people, fearing this negative reaction of others, hid their illness and appeared in the social and work environment with a sick condition. The lack of ambulances, hospital beds, medicine, nurses and doctors were also heard and seen at the beginning of the peak of the corona virus, especially the peak of the beta type (4). All of the above are just some of the ethical challenges in the pandemic era. Therefore, in the present article, the moral challenges of societies during the occurrence of pandemic diseases (such as Covid-19, Sars, etc.) have been investigated.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The method of conceptual analysis has been used to write this article. In this article, theories related to the field of ethics were presented and examples of ethical challenges were analyzed using theories. In this article, ethical theories are taken from several basic sources such as "Ethical Philosophy Foundations" by Robert Holmes, "Ethical Philosophy" by James Rachels, the book "Ethical Philosophy" by Paul Edwards, the book "Encyclopedia of Moral Philosophy" edited by Paul Edwards, Thomas Nigel and Donald Borchert and other theoretical texts. Then, with the help of these theories (utilitarianism, deontologism, virtueism, justiceism, contractualism, and truth-orientedness), an attempt has been made to present moral reasoning about moral challenges. Related keywords were used to find argument evidence and 44 articles were collected from Sciencedirect, Pubmed, Proquest and Elsevier databases and their examples were used according to the purpose.

DISCUSSION

Ethical challenges in pandemics

The types of ethical challenges in pandemics can be predicted either intuitively or by relying on texts and sources. Ethical challenges in widespread diseases, including the epidemic of the Covid-19 virus, can be divided into three categories:

A) Challenges related to sharing facilities: One of the challenges in sharing facilities is choosing between one person and several people. For example, suppose that five new corona patients are admitted to the hospital, which can be maintained with one oxygen machine. But this requires that we take the oxygen device of one of the patients in the corona ward and use it for five people. In this case, that person will be lost and five new people will be saved. What is the right thing to do in this situation?

Some researchers (5) put this real situation in front of 1200 French citizens. The majority of respondents accepted the utilitarian model and voted to remove the oxygen device from one person to save five people. This situation is similar to the classic "runaway train" situation. Imagine that you are a train driver and you realize that completely by chance the brake system and other control tools such as the horn and brake of the passengers are out of order and five workers are working on the rail line a hundred meters ahead. Suppose you can't stop the train and you can't prevent them from dying in any way. But you remember that you can turn the lever to make the train fall onto another track before hitting them. But you can see that one person is working on that other rail. You know that if you do nothing, five people will die, and if you pull the

lever to make the train fall on another track, only one person will be killed (6). What is the right thing to do in this situation? Under the title, "The basis of utilitarianism, we will look at this category in more detail. Another situation is choosing between two people with different ages. For example, suppose there is an oxygen machine and you as a doctor or nurse have to choose between a young person and an old man or woman, or a child and an old man or woman. Also, consider that old man in the position of having underlying disease and without underlying disease, rich and poor, scholar and illiterate, statesman and ordinary person, a person from the political elite class and a person from the working class and the like. If you had to choose between a child and an elder statesman (for example, a minister or the head of a large organization), which one should be chosen? In these situations, various viewpoints such as the viewpoint of the right to benefit from life, the utilitarian viewpoint and social benefit, the virtuous viewpoint and the superiority of virtuous people over less virtuous people, and the like have been proposed that we will discuss it further.

B) Challenges related to providing or not providing medical services: Consider a situation where the corona disease has reached its peak and some doctors or nurses have a weak foundation or have an underlying disease, but their absence will be a significant blow to the triage, emergency, and special corona care departments. Is there a right called "the right to avoid evil" (7) in which people have the right to avoid evil and save themselves? Isn't there such a right and doctors and nurses are obliged to provide services to doctors and patients even if their own lives are in danger and because of the underlying disease, the possibility of contracting the corona disease and the risk of their lives is high? This is another ethical challenge.

C) The challenge of how to react when faced with a controversial and possibly unethical situation: For example, suppose the nurse observes a situation in which the doctor has given the ICU room to an old man who is not in such a bad condition and his lungs have about 10% involvement. Suppose the doctor in this situation took a very sick child out of the ICU room and transferred him to the general ward and took this rich old man or high-ranking government official to the ICU room. Is the nurse morally obligated to react? Is he obliged to disclose?

Arguments of ethical theories about the ethical challenges of pandemics

A) Utilitarianism

In the previous lines, the challenge of the classic position of the unbridled train was raised. In that situation, given that 5 people are likely to die, should the train be allowed to continue on its "natural" course, or should the course be changed to cause the death of someone who would have survived had the train's course not been changed? If you use the famous "cost-benefit" approach in this particular situation, you might argue this way: changing the direction of the lever will have better results overall because more people's lives will be saved and not lost (6). So, in this case, you conclude that pulling the lever to the other side is the right thing to do because the net result is that 4 more people survive. If the reasoning process used in this particular case is extended to arrive at a general rule, you get a kind of utilitarian theory. But can this theory be generalized to similar cases without contradiction and completely stable and uniform? To make the meaning of uniformity clearer, imagine an out-of-control train again, but this time you are the observer of the story, not the train driver. Imagine standing on a bridge and looking at an out-of-control train running down the tracks. You can see that the train is hitting a crowd standing on the tracks and around the train tracks. Suppose, on the bridge and next to you, a very large fat person weighing about 250 kg

is standing and bent over to watch the out-of-control train. You know that if you give him a small push when the train is approaching, he will fall off the bridge right in front of the train and that will be enough to stop the train. In this way, you will be able to save the lives of many people who would otherwise die. Would you push the fat man off the bridge in front of the train? If not, why? What has changed in these two scenarios? If your argument is from the position of utilitarian or consequentialist theory, in both cases you should arrive at the same directive because in both cases one person dies and several people survive. But you probably think it's wrong to push someone under a train, even if doing so would result in several people surviving. You might argue that intentionally causing someone's death is morally wrong. You might also say that knowingly and actively causing someone's death is unfair and unjust, and that this version is not the correct instruction.

It should be noted that withholding medical facilities from one person to save five people is like pushing one person off a bridge to save train passengers. The only difference is that the person on the bridge is not involved in the situation, but the person who is sick and hospitalized is involved in the situation. Therefore, the utilitarian version does not consider the rights of individuals and may cause oppression to weak and marginalized people.

b) Deontologism

The author of the book "Good and Right" (8) has defined the duties as much as possible. According to him, there are seven duties in the first place that should be performed, but these duties may not be our final duties, and the final duty is determined in the situation based on which one has more weight. They are:

- Loyalty, which consists of duties that are based on promises or implicit promises;
- Reparation, which consists of duties that are based on past wrongdoing and the obligation to compensate for it;
- Gratitude or duties that are based on gratitude and knowledge;
- Justice, which is based on preventing unfair distribution of benefits and losses;
- Charity or duties that are based on promoting the health, happiness and good of others;
- Self-improvement or the duties that a person is responsible for promoting his own good and happiness;
- Not harming or duties that are based on preventing any kind of harm (physical, mental, financial) to others.

All duties before examining the field of action are at first glance duties, but after examining the context, they may no longer be duties.

According to the thoughts of the author of the book "Good and Right" (8), the duties of charity, gratitude, loyalty, and not harming (the patients) rule in favor of the presence of doctors and nurses at their workplaces when disasters occur. In virtues, virtue is considered the most important, and the virtue of courage and self-control has priority over other intrinsically good things. Therefore, Ras's duty-based approach dictates the immorality of leaving one's job when epidemics occur.

Another researcher (9) in the book "common morality" defined dutifulness from the point of view of what an ordinary person perceives from "duty in accordance with the role" and made it the criterion of what duty is. According to him, the well-known principle of ethics is "do your duty". The duty here is the specific obligations that are assigned to us through the role we have accepted in the society, such as a signatory of a contract, a citizen, a parent, an employer, a doctor, a nurse, an engineer, an employee, or a worker. Our intuitive expectation from the doctor is to cure the patient. Performing a role-appropriate task is what we naturally expect from every role owner,

and our intuitions confirm it. The owners of important social roles who are active in organizations have given their neck to certain professional principles and organizational principles and have approved them. For example, doctors are bound by the principles of medical ethics and hospital organizational ethics, and so are nurses. For this reason, if leaving a job at a critical time is against the principles of professional and organizational ethics, it is of course unethical.

Based on what was mentioned, several methods can be listed to determine the task in a difficult situation:

The first method is the abundance of principles and components that are placed in front of each other. The first criterion is that if a greater number of professional and organizational principles are in conflict with a smaller number of principles, the decision that is based on more principles prevails, which of course is not always the case and there are exceptions.

The second method is to consider violation of principles (professional and organizational). According to this method, a person should check if a series of general principles are violated by making a decision. If a decision causes a series of professional and organizational principles to be completely violated, that decision should not be taken, but a decision should be taken that does not cause a series of principles to be violated. By making that decision, it is possible to prevent the violation of other principles as much as possible.

The third method is to examine the effect of the decision on other organizational and professional principles. If a decision has a positive effect on more organizational and professional principles or has a negative effect on less professional and organizational principles, it is better.

The fourth method is to examine the rights of individuals. If a decision violates the rights of people who are not involved in the situation, it is not a correct decision, and if it does not cause such a thing, then it should be examined from the other aspects mentioned above.

C) Virtueism

Virtueism in ethics considers the basis of judging the correctness of actions to be the comparison of actions with the actions of a virtuous person. A virtuous person is someone who has developed an admirable character and temperament through practice. Therefore, according to the virtue theory, if an action is in accordance with the actions of an ideal virtuous person, it is a right action, and if an action is not in accordance with the actions of an ideal virtuous person, it is not a right action (10). An ideal virtuous person has qualities such as courage, generosity, chivalry, restraint, magnanimity, humility, piety, temperance, and the like. In a category, admirable characters can be divided into acquired and non-acquired. Based on this, non-acquired traits that have appeared in a person's stature due to genetics or natural chance and that person has not made an effort for it, are not virtues (11). While courage, self-control and anger, generosity and the like are among acquired traits that are virtues. One of the researchers (12) has introduced another group of virtues called the virtues of the mind, which are also acquired and worthy of admiration and therefore worthy of appreciation. According to the virtue theory, if an action is in accordance with the virtues of the mind, it is praiseworthy and right. For example, accuracy, comprehensiveness, partiality, open and receptive mind, criticism and criticism, and the like are among the virtues of the mind.

If we want to use the virtuous theory in difficult corona situations, then we should:

- Allocate the distribution of facilities based on the virtues of the patient;
- To judge whether or not to serve doctors and nurses who have an underlying disease or physical weakness based on the characteristics of an ideal virtuous person;

- Regarding the reaction or non-reaction and disclosure and non-disclosure of controversial and unethical situations in the position of supervisor, let's rely on the actions of a virtuous person.

The second and third cases do not cause any problems because they are consistent with the intuitions of ordinary people. The intuitions of normal people and with the mentality that we have of an ideal virtuous person, we cannot accept that when a crisis occurs, a virtuous person, even if he is not in good physical condition, leaves the sick and thinks about his life. So, this is incorrect. Also, with the mentality that we have of an ideal virtuous person, we cannot accept that a virtuous person does not show courage, remain silent, or disclose when observing injustice or an immoral act. Therefore, not reacting is wrong.

But the distribution of facilities based on the virtues of the patient is controversial. If, in a hypothetical situation, we want to choose between a virtuous man and a child, and assign him the respirator, which one should we choose? The child or the virtuous man?

Some philosophers (13) state that according to Aristotle, reason has two components, which are theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom, and the most important virtue that can establish perfect harmony between these two components of reason is the virtue of justice. Virtue in Aristotle's philosophy means the rational guidance of human and society's physical powers in the path of moderation. Now consider whether it is moderate to prefer virtuous people over ordinary people in difficult situations? Is this action consistent with the virtues of a virtuous person? Is such a preference consistent with the virtue of justice and establishing moderation in society?

Someone may want to argue in a utilitarian way and say that a virtuous person is more beneficial to society or has more rights to society. But in this case, either virtueism is reduced to utilitarianism and, like the utilitarian versions, it causes people's rights not to be considered. Or virtue is translated into rights that cause the loss of other people's rights (such as the right to life). Secondly, virtueism does not show a way to determine which virtues are superior to the other in situations where two virtuous people are subject to a choice to allocate facilities.

D) Contractualism

Moral contractualism has its roots in the ideas of contract holders, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and their followers. According to them, social life becomes possible when people agree to give up some of their rights and freedoms and hand it over to a government or government. Instead, by accepting the rules and regulations that are agreed between the people and the government, they gain security and order (6). Therefore, if such an agreement does not happen, society will not be created. This agreement is not an official agreement, but is established informally, implicitly and unspoken, and it is not like the two parties sit down and sign an agreement. The existence of an agreement shows itself when people start an uprising and revolution, and this means that they do not accept the existing default agreement. Because the establishment of social life is based on the agreement between the government and the people, therefore, morality acquires its meaning in the context of social life, and without social life, morality basically does not find its true meaning. For this reason, contractarians believe that the basis of ethics is the contract, and if it was not the primary contract, ethics would have no meaning. The norms that have spread unspoken among people in social life are a kind of secret contract. For this reason, according to them, morality means a contract, and the contract between the government and the nation, which is the observance of laws and regulations, is also morality. Therefore, whatever is legal is moral. According to contractarians, a moral statement is

justified only if a large number of people agree on it under certain conditions, and it does not matter if this agreement is compatible with other values of that group or society or not (10). If there is no agreement on a norm, or if a norm is not in accordance with the law and regulations, it cannot be said that it is ethical, and furthermore, it cannot be claimed that not doing that norm is unethical. The problem with the theory of contractarianism is that it is minimal. For example, the agreement between the government and the people is that when there are fights and conflicts in the city, the police will intervene to end the riots. There is no agreement between people to intervene and end the conflict when a fight occurs in the city. Therefore, according to moral contractualism, intervening in a fight and preventing harm or chaos is a neutral act and it cannot be claimed that it is a moral act. Also, based on contractualism, it cannot be claimed that picking up garbage from the ground and throwing it in the trash can is a moral act because according to the social contract, this work is the responsibility of the municipality and people pay taxes for the municipality to cover these matters. In big cities, we have seen many times that a strong man or a thief attacks a weak person and steals his property, and instead of intervening, people film and call the police. While our moral intuitions say that if there is an ability to deal with oppression, a person is obliged to intervene and prevent harm. This lack of intervention shows that the basis of morality of some of us humans is contractual and minimal. If we look at the three categories of difficult corona situation from the point of view of contractualism, we can see that:

- Ethical action in allocating resources and facilities to patients is an action that is carried out according to hospital protocols, even if these protocols are utilitarian and against the moral intuition of conventional people;
- Ethical action in helping patients is an action that corresponds to the shift and working hours. If a nurse or doctor completes his work shift and leaves the hospital despite the need of the hospital and the presence of patients in need of help, and the patients die because of leaving, he has not acted immorally;
- If a person witnesses a controversial situation, he is not obliged to react because the monitoring of the affairs of doctors and nurses is the responsibility of the hospital monitoring and evaluation board according to the regulations, and if he does not do anything, he has not committed an unethical act. We can see that none of the above three cases are compatible with conventional human intuitions, because this way of thinking may be understandable in normal conditions, but in crisis conditions, it is not only acceptable and not a solution to the crisis, but may increase the crisis. Therefore, contractualism cannot be a suitable basis for facing the ethical challenges of pandemics.

E) Justiceism

Justiceism in its modern sense owes a lot to Rawls's thought. Three types of justice can be distinguished: compensatory justice, which means efforts to restore the state of balance when violations occur; Procedural justice, which means diligence in establishing fair procedures; and distributive justice, which means diligence in the fair distribution of benefits and losses (14). In the theory of justice presented by John Rawls, he considers distributive justice more important than other types of justice. But through a series of arguments, he states that distributive justice and compensatory justice are not possible except through the realization of procedural justice. Rawls presupposes a systematic and orderly society in which regulations are supposed to be established with the consent and informed consent of the people. Rawls' emphasis on conscious consent is because he bases ethics on the concept of consent. Consent is everything that flows between the people and the people, or the government and the people, and the people

consent to it, whether spoken or unsaid, formally or implicitly. In order to achieve the rules and regulations that are acceptable to everyone, he proposes a test, which is actually a procedure to achieve fair policies. He says, suppose people intend to create a society and there is no government yet, and a social contract between the government and the people has not been concluded. In this case, people are in the "first state". In this situation, people logically seek to create a society to promote the good of all members, fair, have general rules for all, and have stability. It is certain that rules should be chosen among the people in the first place and be generally accepted, which should not be contaminated by the interests and purposes of individuals. Rawls considers the condition of choice to be in the state of "veil of ignorance". The hypothetical situation of the veil of ignorance is a situation in which policy makers or anyone who makes decisions must assume that they are waiting to be born behind the veil of ignorance along with a group of people who have exemplary bodies and have not yet been born. It is assumed that people in this situation do not know whether they will be born black or white, poor or rich, female or dead. Rawls claims that in the state of veil of ignorance, each person makes decisions or policies based on two principles:

- Basic freedoms should be maximal and everyone has an equal right to have freedom, provided that these freedoms do not limit the freedom of others;
- Social and economic inequalities should be arranged in such a way that firstly it can reasonably be predicted that it benefits everyone and secondly it is related to positions that are open to everyone (15). Now, if we look at the three difficult situations mentioned at the beginning of the article from the perspective of justice, then:
- Unequal allocation of hospital facilities are justified only if all people actually benefit from that unequal situation. For this reason, it is fair to allocate unequal facilities to doctors and nurses with corona, or scientists whose existence is necessary for the production of medicine and other types of resources and public facilities;
- If we are obliged to make policies and set laws behind the veil of ignorance, we cannot agree to a policy or a decision in which people have the right to avoid providing services to patients when epidemics occur. Because firstly, there is a small possibility that the person who is behind the veil of ignorance is one of the nurses and doctors, and secondly, we cannot accept that avoiding service is open to everyone;
- If we are required to make policies and decisions from behind the veil of ignorance, we cannot limit the freedom of others and oblige them to react or disclose. And if there is no reaction or disclosure, we will prosecute them. Our intuition dictates that we consider reaction or disclosure as a right for humans, not as a duty. Therefore, the policy we will establish will be to react and make disclosures, and no one has the right to deprive us of our other rights due to disclosure and reaction.

F) Truth-orientedness

Truth-orientedness theories have been formed on the basis that humans have rights in existence, not duties. According to this theory, humans have three types of rights:

- Personal rights include the right to have clean air to breathe, the right to walk on the ground, the right to eat, the right to read, the right to write, the right to express one's opinion, and the like.
- The rights that a person owes to others and the rights that others owe to a person include the right of a friend to a friend, the right of a child to a parent, the right of a parent to a child, the right of a wife to a wife, the right of a neighbor to a neighbor, and the like;
- The rights that the government owes to man and the rights that man owes to the government. The rights of the government are on the shoulders of the citizens to comply with the laws and

regulations of the government, and the rights of the citizens on the government are not to limit the freedoms that do not limit the freedom of others, to ensure security and order (16). The rights between the government and the people can be positive rights or negative rights (6). Positive rights are rights that are the duty of the government and the government deems it necessary and the people demand it from the government. For example, in America, educating people under the age of 18 until the end of high school is a positive right, and the government is obliged to provide these people, whether they are rich or poor, with the opportunity of free education until the end of high school. A negative right is a right in which if someone tries to have something or act, no one has the right to prevent it. For example, buying a computer or voting is a negative right, and no one has the right to prevent someone else from buying a computer or voting. Based on the basis of Truth-orientedness, it is a moral act to consider the above three rights and not violate them, and it is an immoral act to violate the rights.

One of the rights that has been considered among the personal rights of humans is the right to benefit from all seasons of life as a negative right (17). This right is derived from the right to human life, which according to many thinkers (except for people like Peter Synge who have a utilitarian position) is one of the natural rights of humans. And it has been emphasized in the declaration of human rights and international laws for a long time. In defense of this right, many thinkers have argued against the death sentence, abortion, and euthanasia, but there are other thinkers who have recognized this right as a negative right. That is, if someone wants to use his life, no one has the right to take it away from him (18). According to this right, every human being born from a mother has the right to use all seasons of life. According to this idea, man has four seasons of life: childhood, youth, middle age and old age, which are spring, summer, autumn and winter of life. Based on this right, anyone who has benefited from less seasons of life has priority over others who have benefited more from these seasons of life. For example, a child has priority over an adult because the child has benefited from only one season of life, while the adult has benefited from three seasons of his life. Based on this right, being and living is a gift that happens only once to every human being and it is a gift that cannot be repeated. Therefore, it cannot be limited or ignored based on social benefit, virtue or anything else. If we base this theory on our moral policy, then in pandemics:

- In allocating facilities and especially when a dilemma occurs, children have priority over young people, young people over middle-aged people, and middle-aged people over old people, which is in line with our intuitions;
- In the issue of providing services and not providing services, the right to benefit from life cannot be the basis of action and no instructions can be derived from it, and other rights must be referred to, including the mutual rights of the patient and the doctor or the patient and the nurse;
- In the matter of reaction to controversial situations or revelations, as in the second case, other rights should be referred to, including the mutual rights of the patient and the doctor or the patient and the nurse.

CONCLUSION

In this article, we tried to examine three types of difficult situations based on different ethical theories. The effort was to study which ethical theory provides a better answer in the situation of allocating limited hospital facilities to patients, the situation of providing service or leaving service when weak or underlying illness, and disclosure of controversial decisions. In fact, utilitarian, deontologism, virtueism, contractualism, justice-oriented, and truth-

oriented theories each have implications for the mentioned three situations. And what version do they offer for the above situations and which version of the proposed theory is compatible with the moral intuitions of conventional people. Based on what was discussed in this article, utilitarian theories ignore the rights of individuals. Because they are based on the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people, therefore, the proposed versions of this theory may harm the rights of marginalized people or minorities, and even those who are not in a position may suffer for the benefit of the majority. It was also mentioned that the theory of duty orientation is a good idea to solve difficult situations because it emphasizes on tasks that are consistent with the social role, but duty orientation has complications that make it difficult to determine the main duty from two duties. In addition, we mentioned that the version of contractualism is minimal and the versions that we listed relying on contractualism for triple positions were not consistent with our intuitions. For example, it was not acceptable for people to stop reacting or revealing due to the lack of a contract or agreement between citizens, or between citizens and the government. It was also mentioned that Rawls' theory of procedural justice is also a good version for resolving conflicts in difficult corona situations. Because it recognizes the discriminatory allocation of facilities to people useful to society (such as doctors and scientists). It considers not serving as immoral. And he considers disclosure as a right that, if used, no one has the right to attack or impeach. Finally, we have seen that the rightist theory is not a good idea for ethical policy in ethical challenges related to pandemics because it does not provide a specific prescription for the situation of serving or leaving the service, and the situation of reaction and disclosure.

In general, we can say:

In the situation of bottleneck in the allocation of facilities, the right to benefit from all seasons of life is the focus of resource allocation, and people who have benefited from fewer seasons of life have priority over people who have benefited from more seasons of life. Nevertheless, the inequality in the allocation of facilities is justified when this discrimination has a tangible practical effect on the lives of other members of the society. For this reason, discrimination in the treatment of doctors, nurses, and hospital staff involved in corona situations is acceptable.

Due to the fact that not doing the duty is considered an unfair act for us, any kind of avoidance of service under the excuse of weakness, fear of illness, the right to take leave, or travel and the like is unethical. And conventional human intuitions do not accept that the owner of a job leaves that job in sensitive situations and only provides services in normal situations.

In situations where a person observes a controversial situation as an observer, he has the right to disclosure, and this is a negative right, and if he does not use his right, he has not committed an immoral act. Also, if he discloses, no one has the right to hinder him or disturb him or make inquiries and disturb him. But in order to disclose, one must first have enough evidence to defend himself and secondly, have relative confidence that public disclosure will bring about good changes, and finally, public disclosure should be considered as the last step.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical issues (such as plagiarism, conscious satisfaction, misleading, making and or forging data, publishing or sending to two places, redundancy and etc.) have been fully considered by the writers.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interests.

REFERENCES

1. Stewart A, Sinclair E, Ng JC, O'Hare JS, Page A, Serangeli I, Margreitter C, Orsenigo F, Longman K, Frampas C, Costa C, Lewis HM, Kasar N, Wu B, Kipling D, Openshaw PJ, Chiu C, Baillie JK, Scott JT, Semple MG, Bailey MJ, Fraternali F, Dunn-Walters DK. Pandemic, Epidemic, Endemic. Front Immunol 2022; 13: 807104. doi: https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2022.807104 PMID: 35592326; PMCID: PMC9111746
2. Ekmekci EP, Folayan OM. A theoretical framework for ethical decision-making during public health emergencies. Acta Bioethica, 2022; 28 (1): 105-116. Doi: 10.4067/S1726-569X2022000100105
3. Georgy A, Williamson E. I think it just made everything very much more intense': a qualitative secondary analysis exploring the role of friends and family providing support to survivors of domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Family Violence, 2022; 37 (6): 991-1004. Doi: 10.1007/s10896-021-00292-3
4. Carnibella F. Framing of policy responses to migrant horticultural labour shortages during Covid-19 in the Italian print media. Journal of Rural Studies, 2022; 95: 278-293. Doi: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2022.09.007
5. Carron R, Blanc N, Brigaud E. Contextualizing sacrificial dilemmas within Covid19 for the study of moral judgment. PLoS ONE, 2022; 17(8): e0273521. Doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0273521
6. Tavani H. Ethics and technology; controversies, questions, and strategies for ethical computing. 5th ed. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons. 2015.
7. Swazo KN, Talukder MMH, Ahsan MK. A duty to treat? A right to refrain? Bangladeshi physicians in moral dilemma during COVID-19. Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine, 2020; 15 (7): 1-23. PMCID: PMC7478915 Doi: 10.1186/s13010-020-00091-6
8. Ross D. The right and the good. Edited by Philip Stratton-Lake. 1st ed. New York: Oxford university press. 2002.
9. Gert B. Common morality: deciding what to do. 1st ed. USA: New York: Oxford University Press. 2007.
10. Rachels J. The elements of moral philosophy. 2nd ed. USA: Mc Graw Hill College. 1994.
11. Holmes RL. Basic moral philosophy. 3rd ed. USA/CA: Wadsworth Publishing Company. 2003.
12. Zagzebski L. Virtues of the mind: an inquiry into the nature of virtue and the ethical foundations of knowledge. 1st ed. London: Cambridge University Press. 2012. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139174763
13. Edwards P. The encyclopedia of philosophy. 1st ed. Canada: Pearson College. 1967
14. Solum LB. Procedural justice. Southern California Law Review, 2005; 78 (1): 187-321.
15. Sandel MJ. Liberalism and the limits of justice. 2nd ed. England/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1998. Doi: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511810152
16. Upton H. Right-based morality and Hohfeld's relations. Journal of Ethics, 2000; 4 (3): 237-256.
17. Lloyd-Sherlock P, Guntupalli A, Sempé L. Age discrimination, the right to life, and COVID-19 vaccination in countries with limited resources. Journal of Social Issues, 2021; https://doi.org/10.1111/josi.12561
18. Dragne L, Balaceanu CT. The right to life – a fundamental human right. Social Economic Debates, 2014; 2 (2). Doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2408937