

CORRESPONDENCE



FROM THE SCHINDLER PRIZE TRUST

Sir,

One hears widespread fears that a new ethic is taking hold in medical and nursing circles. Decisions are being taken that some elderly or disabled lives are not worth living, so if the patient falls ill, they should be sedated and finished off. You

may be uneasy about this, but what can be done about it.

Terry Schindler- Schiavo, a young brain injured woman, needed no other support than good nursing and rehabilitative care. She was dependent upon a feeding tube and died when it was removed against her parents wishes.

“First do no harm” a medical group who prefer care to killing, is offering an annual prize of £500 to honour their name. This will be awarded to a doctor or a nurse who provides the best account IN RECOGNITION OF A COLLEAGUE, OR A RELATIVE OR FRIEND OF THE PATIENT, who, in their professional opinion, has engaged in a battle to save a life that had been dismissed as valueless .

The account should describe a situation where someone known to you attempted to save the life of the patient who was either: suffering from dangerous neglect, or was denied food and fluids when unable to speak for him or herself .

What is important is that, whether or not the attempt was successful, it was sustained and revealed that persons beliefs in the value of human life and the duty of all professionals to do no harm.

Send entries to; First Do No Harm, PO Box 17317, London SW3 4WJ.

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DR RICHARD LAMERTON, TRUSTEE

Picture courtesy of the Terri Schiavo Life and Hope Network <http://www.terrisfight.org>