

City University of Hong Kong

Department of Public Policy

Research Student Seminar

**Advance Directives in the Palliative Care
in China: Confucian Bioethics, Practice,
and Policy**

by

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Date:	4 Oct 2018
Time:	15:00 -16:30
Venue:	POL's Multi-purpose Room (B7516), Yeung Kin Man Acad Building City University of Hong Kong
Language:	English

Abstract:

As the development of medical technology, more treatments could maintain and prolong patients' life; but excessive life-sustaining treatments may hurt patient's dignity and make family exhausted. Decisions about withholding or withdrawing treatments are commonly encountered when caring for patients entering the very terminal phase. Advance directives (預先遺囑) help people to express their medical willingness and preferences when they have consciousness.

In advance directives, two debatable issues have inspired some heated discussion: whether family member or physician should comply with the patient's advance directive or to instead take actions that violate their preferences; which opinions diverge is that of the nature and scope of advance directives, whereby an individual can specify in advance what medical treatment he wishes to have at the end of life. In the absence of relevant policy support and guidelines regarding advance directives in China, four major objectives will be explored in this study to address these issues. Firstly, to study who, namely, patient, family, physician, some of them, or all of them together, should have authority to make and sign an advance directive. Secondly, to explore what kinds of life-sustaining-treatment-withholding can be morally justified and be included in an advance

directive. Thirdly, to explore what kinds of life-sustaining-treatment-withdrawing can be morally justified and be included in an advance directive. Finally, to pursue what policy regarding advance directives should be formulated in Mainland China.

Confucianism has a long history of being the mainstream ethical tradition in China and its conception of virtue has remained influential in the contemporary life of Chinese people. This study, therefore, will provide a Confucian cultural basis for the understanding of advance directives in the Chinese context. This study attempts to explore and analyze the aforementioned four major objectives by drawing on Confucian bioethics. As for methodology, this study will depend on a purely qualitative approach by adopting in-depth interviews as the primary method to collect data. Then, multiple cases study will be added as the supplemental method to explore the research objectives.

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(Free admission)

All are welcome!