



The Lazarus Case: Life-and-Death Issues in Neonatal Intensive Care (Medicine and Culture)

John D. Lantos

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In this new, startlingly original book, John D. Lantos weaves a compelling story that captures the dilemmas of modern medical practice. *The Lazarus Case: Life-and-Death Issues in Neonatal Intensive Care* begins with a fictional malpractice case -- an amalgam of typical cases in which Lantos appeared as an expert witness -- and uses it as the framework for addressing the ethical issues surrounding neonatal intensive care. Lantos draws on his experience in neonatal medicine, pediatrics, and medical ethics to explore multiple ethical dilemmas through one poignant representative situation.

In Lantos's model case, a doctor decides to stop resuscitation of a premature infant, a tiny "preemie" who seems past reasonable care. The baby survives with severe neurological defects and the parents sue the doctor, alleging that stopping treatment was negligent. From this case, Lantos considers our moral obligations to critically ill babies, the meaning of negligence, and the sorts of social structures that shape the moral consciences of doctors.

Each chapter begins with Lantos deposing in the conference room of the plaintiffs' lawyers. The questions put to Lantos throughout the deposition spark an engrossing retelling of his personal experiences with premature babies, as well as his thoughtful discussions of ethics, morality, history, and medical statistics. Sprinkled throughout the book are references to fictional works by Camus, Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, Twain, and others. Lantos uses these literary examples to further illustrate the ambiguities, misunderstandings, responsibilities, and evasions that plague our decisions regarding life and death, medical care and medical education, and ultimately the cost and value of preserving the lives of the most vulnerable among us.

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