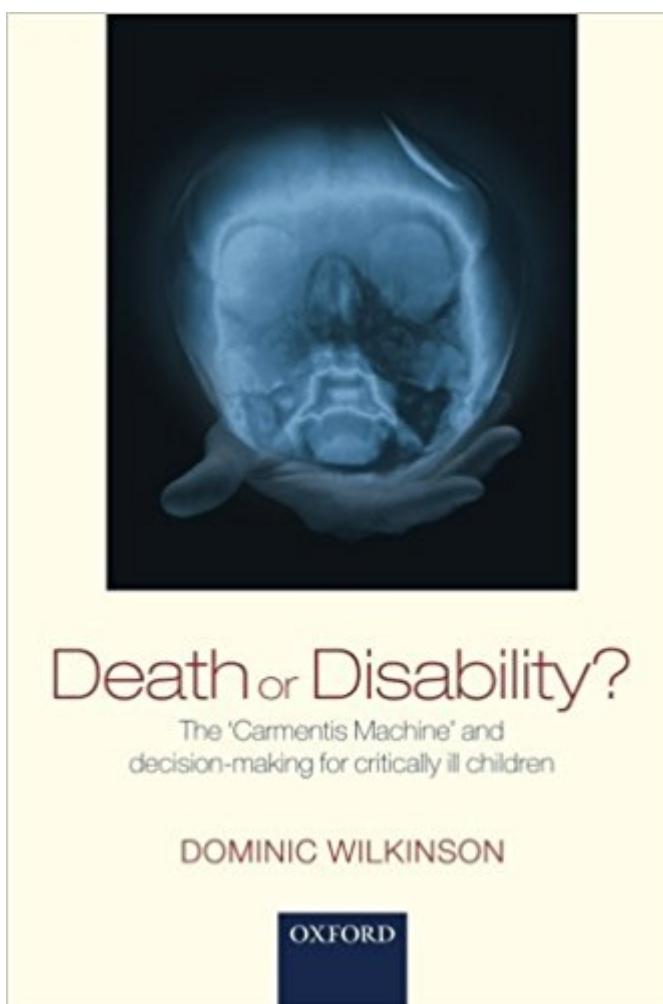


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Death Or Disability?: The 'Carmentis Machine' And Decision-making For Critically Ill Children



Synopsis

In ancient Rome parents would consult the priestess Carmentis shortly after birth to obtain prophecies of the future of their newborn infant. Today, parents and doctors of critically ill children consult a different oracle. Neuroimaging provides a vision of the child's future, particularly of the nature and severity of any disability. Based on the results of brain scans and other tests doctors and parents face heart-breaking decisions about whether or not to continue intensive treatment or to allow the child to die. Paediatrician and ethicist Dominic Wilkinson looks at the profound and contentious ethical issues facing those who work in intensive care caring for critically ill children and infants. When should infants or children be allowed to die? How accurate are predictions of future quality of life? How much say should parents have in these decisions? How should they deal with uncertainty about the future? He combines philosophy, medicine and science to shed light on current and future dilemmas.

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"This is a wonderful book: wise, clever, humane, realistic and humble. It will be, and richly deserves to be, the cornerstone of academic and practitioner debate of this terrible, and terribly important area of ethics and medicine."--Charles Foster, European Journal of Health Law "This is a book that must be read by everybody who is seriously interested in the bioethical issues that arise in neonatal intensive care or, more generally, in decision making for children with chronic, debilitating or life-threatening conditions. Wilkinson critically summarizes the work in this field over the last two decades and adds his own insights to that work."--John D. Lantos, Notre Dame Philosophical

Reviews" The author skilfully draws on his training in philosophy, bioscience and clinical practice to offer an analysis that is original, not merely in content but also in form. Wilkinsons comparison of the Carmentis Machine with contemporary neuroimaging is inspired." --Deborah Bowman, Times Higher Education Supplement" This was an interesting read, comprehensive, analytical, and thought-provoking... Wilkinson does a good job of articulating and providing evidence to support his point of view. He successfully accomplishes what he sets out to do, while keeping the reader entertained with historical points, clinical examples, and philosophical theories and vignettes." --Marlyse F. Haward, The American Journal of Bioethics" This book reflects a remarkable blend of philosophical sophistication and clinical expertise. ... Wilkinson's book will be mandatory reading for philosophers and clinical ethicists who are writing on, or working with, critically ill children and their parents." -- Mind

Dominic Wilkinson is Associate Professor of Neonatal Medicine and Bioethics at the University of Adelaide, and a senior research associate of the Oxford Uehiro Centre for Practical Ethics. He has worked as a doctor in neonatal, paediatric and adult intensive care, and is currently consultant neonatologist at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide. He has a DPhil in medical ethics from the University of Oxford, and has written a large number of academic articles relating to ethical issues in intensive care.

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