

## **Patients with Alzheimer's Disease: Ethical Issues and Making Therapeutic Decisions**

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Please cite this article as: Gharsellaoui S. et al. Patients with Alzheimer's Disease: Ethical Issues and Making Therapeutic Decisions. Middle East Journal of Age and Ageing. 15(3):55. DOI: 10.5742MEJAA.2018.93567

### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** The decisions to be taken during Alzheimer's disease turn out to be highly questionable. Indeed, the difficulty of the decision lies especially in the specific vulnerabilities of these patients.

**Methods and findings:** Through a review of literature, our aim is to highlight the ethical issues in making therapeutic decisions for patients with Alzheimer's disease.

**Results:** The clinical features of Alzheimer's disease make people particularly vulnerable. This vulnerability makes patients extremely dependent on doctor and family. In fact, patients have difficulty in expressing a choice and protecting their dignity.

In the therapeutic decision, the quality of life is a major parameter. These patients not only enjoy the same therapeutic possibilities as others but also a rigorous application of the principles of ethics. This must respect their dignity, their autonomy and their freedom.

Therefore it is important to not neglect the residual decision-making abilities that leave the possibility of refusal or reluctance.

**Conclusion:** In Alzheimer's disease, the ethical decision must respect the four fundamental ethical principles: benevolence, non-maleficence, autonomy and justice. However, with respect to the application of these principles, practical impasses are frequent.