



CUHK CENTRE FOR BIOETHICS 10TH ANNIVERSARY
Celebration Events

The 10th Anniversary Celebration Seminar Series

Seminar I: Dementia, Advance Directives, and Oral Feeding: What Does Respect for Patients Permit? What Does It Require?

Date: Monday, 24 February 2025

Time: 10:00am – 11:00am

Venue: Rooms 204 & 206, Choh-Ming Li Basic Medical Sciences Building, CUHK (and hybrid on ZOOM)

Abstracts & Biographies of Speaker/Discussant

Professor Paul Menzel (Speaker)

“Dementia, Advance Directives, and Oral Feeding: What Does Respect for Patients Permit? What Does It Require?”

Some people strongly want not to live into years of severe dementia. Some of them write advance directives to withhold manually assisted oral food and drink when they reach a specified level of impairment. Such directives face significant barriers to implementation, including ethical objections. Primary among the objections is the “then-self/now-self” problem.

Professor Menzel will argue that respect for the patients ethically permits clinicians and surrogate decision-makers to carry out such directives. In some circumstances it may even require them to. The then-self/now-self problem for directives to withhold oral feeding can be resolved in the same way it is for more conventional directives to withhold lifesaving treatment.

Paul T. Menzel is Professor of Philosophy Emeritus at Pacific Lutheran University, has published widely on moral questions in health policy, including *Strong Medicine: The Ethical Rationing of Health Care and Prevention vs. Treatment: What’s the Right Balance?* More recently he co-authored with Bonnie Steinbock *Bioethics: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press 2023) and co-edited *Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking: A Compassionate, Widely Available Option for Hastening Death* (Oxford 2021). With Hope Wechkin and others, he is the co-author of “Clinical Guidelines for Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED),” *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, June 21, 2023, and of several papers on advance directives for withholding oral food and drink and on “minimal comfort feeding” for patients in severe dementia.



Professor Timothy Kwok (Discussant)

Timothy Kwok graduated from University of Leicester in the UK and received specialist training in Geriatric and Internal Medicine in St George's Hospital in London before returning to Hong Kong, to join the Department of Medicine & Therapeutics in the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) in 1994. He obtained his MD in 2004. He was promoted to professorship in 2006, and was endowed SC Ho Professorship in 2022. At CUHK, Professor Kwok is Director of Jockey Club Centre for Positive Ageing (a comprehensive care centre for people with dementia) and Jockey Club centre for osteoporosis care and control. His research interests include Alzheimer disease, dementia care, B vitamins for brain health, osteoporosis, falls, nutrition in older people. He served in the guardianship board for several years.

Last Update on 20 January 2025