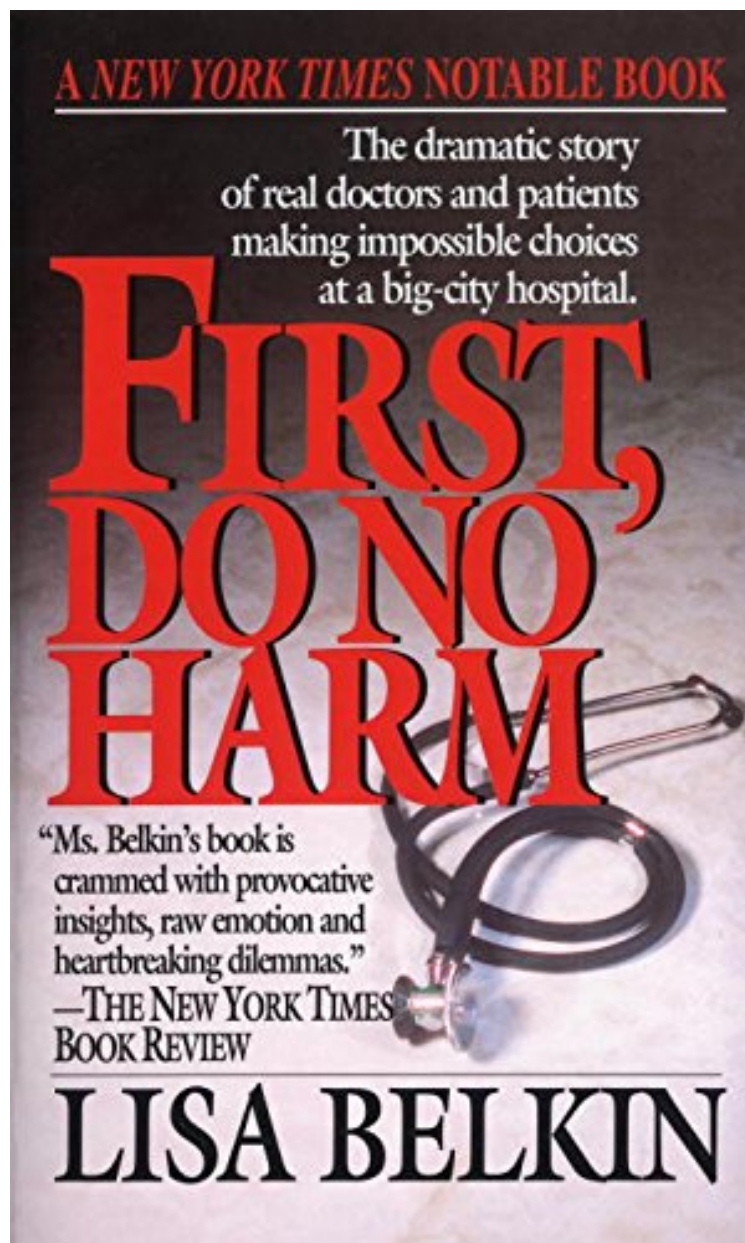


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First, Do No Harm: The Dramatic Story of Real Doctors and Patients Making Impossible Choices at a Big-City Hospital

Lisa Belkin

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before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised First, Do No Harm: The Dramatic Story of Real Doctors and Patients Making Impossible Choices at a Big-City Hospital:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Power Writing, Power Reporting, Power Insights By Andres T. Tapia Sure there is plenty of powerful content to praise, but first I want to celebrate author Lisa Belkin's fabulous writing style. She sure knows how to tell a gripping and compelling story. In the tradition of nonfiction writers who write like novelists such as Jon Krakauer (*Into Thin Air*) and Mark Bowden (*Black Hawk Down*) Belkin fuses top-notch reporting with authentic protagonist voices, brilliant insights, and the ability to surface root causes, map out trends, and distill the core philosophical issues at stake. Belkin applies these gifts to telling the story of the most wrenching life and death ethical dilemmas staff, doctors, nurses, and family members face at Hermann Hospital in Houston, Texas. Amazing advances in medical technology have forced all of us to confront questions never before encountered: when do we stop trying to keep someone alive? what is the definition of quality of life? who gets to decide -- the doctors or the family members? what is the difference between the law, ethics, and morals? how to best live with the decision once it's made? It takes courage to delve into these questions and to bear the responsibility for them as the ethics committee does at Hermann. It also took a great amount of bravery to offer journalist Belkin unrestricted access to the inner workings of the hospital and the committee. The result is a significantly important book that contributes in vital ways to the ongoing conversations we need to be having in society and among our families as technology puts us more in the position of having to make god-like decisions. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommend it By Denise Maxwell As a nurse these are issues we deal with all the time and then ask if we helped patients and their family's make the right decision. This certainly showed the ramifications of those decisions. WOW very thought provoking. Should be required reading for all med students and nurses. Highly recommend it 1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Read This PRIOR to Commenting on the Health Care Insurance Debate By Yorkie Girl First, Do No Harm. Here we are, in August 2009, with a very heated battle going on in regards to the health insurance battle. People are worried about death panels, Nazi health care (we will be treating Nazis?), and a number of hysterical assumptions. Guess what! Death panels have existed under other names, or perhaps no names at all. Some hospitals call them Ethics Committees, when they are named. But if you are ever involved with the long-term care of someone who is critically ill, a birth defect, or a severe car accident, YOU become part of a death panel, like it or not. Through describing the life death situations of a variety of patients, author Lisa Belkin educates us in an area a lot of what we don't want to admit to: we will all die, and someone other than ourselves could be making that decision as to when.

"A powerful, true story of life and death in a major metropolitan hospital...Harrowing... An important book." THE NEW YORK TIMES What is life worth? And what is a life worth living? At a time when America faces vital choices about the future of its health care, former NEW YORK TIMES correspondent Lisa Belkin takes a powerful and poignant look at the inner workings of Hermann Hospital in Houston, Texas, telling the remarkable, real-life stories of the doctors, patients, families, and hospital administrators who must ask--and ultimately answer--the most profound and heart-rending questions about life and death.

From Publishers Weekly In novelistic detail, Belkin examines the cases of several patients in a Houston hospital and the ethical considerations of their doctors. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. From School Library Journal YA-- A look at medical ethics and the critical-care decisions made by the ethics committee, doctors, and four sets of patients/parents at Hermann Hospital in Texas between May-October 1988. Quality of life is measured against longevity and consideration is given to expenditure of limited resources. As most of these patients were children or young adults, the book has immediacy for high school students. The epilogue, written four years later, brings closure to decisions made. Young people interested in medicine or the health-care crisis are sure to find this involving.- Barbara Hawkins, Oakton High School, Fairfax, VA Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Taking her title from the physicians' Hippocratic Oath, Belkin, who covers medical issues for the New York Times, spent nearly three years with the Hermann Hospital Ethics Committee in Houston, Texas, researching this provocative book on medical ethics. The daily, convulsive questions of life and death that the committee struggles with are often questions without answers, yet they are somehow answered at the Hermann Hospital and in hospitals across the country every single day. Belkin quotes a Chinese proverb: if you save a life, you are responsible for it. The cruel, deceptively simple wisdom of this proverb is brought home on nearly every page of this entirely true, gripping, and dramatic account of how medical chance and technology trap the unsuspecting in a vise of brutal decision-making. Totally engrossing and highly recommended. For a theological perspective on medical ethics, see the review of *Theological Voices in Medical Ethics* on p. 122.- James Swanton, Albert Einstein Coll. of Medicine, New York Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.