

## **ADVANCED DIRECTIVES AND THE CONCEPT OF COMPETENCE: THE MORAL BARRIER TO RESUSCITATION?**

L. T. Niebrój

Department of Philosophy and Pedagogy, Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland;  
[lniebroj@yahoo.com](mailto:lniebroj@yahoo.com)

The ethical reflection on the principle of respect for autonomy has evolved from protecting the patients' right to direct health care decisions affecting themselves, to describing essential conditions necessary to recognize the patients' consent as being really informed. Some specific problems arise with patients who are not autonomous or whose autonomy is doubtful at the time of undertaking medical treatments. The advanced directives are seen as a means which permits to respect the patient's autonomy even in such difficult situations. Such directives are understood as the declarations made by patients in which they express the will concerning treatment preferences, in particular resuscitation recommendations, in the case of their potential future lack of ability to act autonomously. This communication attempts to answer the question of whether the advanced directives fulfill (and if so, on what basis conditions) the standards established by the concept of competence.