



# **The Law and Ethics of Medicine: Essays on the Inviolability of Human Life**

*John Keown*

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*The Law and Ethics of Medicine: Essays on the Inviolability of Human Life* explains the principle of the inviolability of human life and its continuing relevance to English law governing aspects of medical practice at the beginning and end of life.

The book shows that the principle, though widely recognized as an historic and foundational principle of the common law, has been misunderstood in the legal academy, at the Bar and on the Bench. Part I of the book identifies the confusion and clarifies the principle, distinguishing it from 'vitalism' on the one hand and a 'qualitative' evaluation of human life on the other. Part II addresses legal aspects of the beginning of life, including the history of the law against abortion and its relevance to the ongoing abortion debate in the US; the law relating to the 'morning after' pill; and the legal status of the human embryo in vitro. Part III addresses legal aspects of the end of life, including the euthanasia debate; the withdrawal of tube-feeding from patients in a 'persistent vegetative state'; and the duty to provide palliative treatment.

This unique collection of essays offers a much-needed clarification of a cardinal legal and ethical principle and should be of interest to lawyers, bioethicists, and healthcare professionals (whether they subscribe to the principle or not) in all common law jurisdictions and beyond.

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