Still Alice, Caring for Those at the Edge of Society

Posted on October 3, 2018

Still Alice, Caring For Those At The Edge Of Society

Still Alice is a 2014 American independent drama film written and directed by Richard Glatzer and Westmoreland. It is based on a novel by Genova, which has the same name as the film. The main star in the film, Julianne Moore, as Alice acts like a linguistic professor, is diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease shortly after her 50th birthday. The aim of this paper is to give an analysis of the film. The paper will discuss the health and ethical issues portrayed in the film and also provide an analysis of the legal and ethical concepts involved in healthcare workers caring for such individuals.

The movie starts with Alice in a restaurant with her husband and children to celebrate her 50th birthday. Her daughter Lydia was not present at the celebration as she had an audition to attend. She is also waiting to be introduced at UCLA as the speaker in the linguistic class, as she is known all over the world for her skills and knowledge in linguistics. Later, Alice is seen in a car playing words with friends as she goes to visit Lydia. She tries to talk her off her dream career as an actress, but it doesn't work. After she returns home, she goes for a jog, but while on the way, she forgets where she was. However, after some time, she remembers. This bothers her, but she heads back home anyway. The following morning, she goes to a doctor who inspects her to understand the cause of her memory loss (Genova 20). She goes back home without knowing the cause, and she decides to share with her husband her episodes of memory loss. They later go to the neurologist, who gives them the bad news that Alice is suffering from Alzheimer's disease. The kids are also tested for the disease, and her eldest daughter, Anna, is found to be carrying the gene, meaning sooner or later, she will also start experiencing memory loss. Alice finally loses her mind to the extent she can't remember basic things like what a highlighter is. She also lost her job as a professor, and John had to look for a job in a nearby clinic to finance his family. She, at some point, tries to kill herself by swallowing the bills as she had recorded before, but she can't as she forgets what, in the first place, she was going to do in the bedroom. At the end of the film, Lydia reads a story to her mother, and she happens to have flashes; she can't speak anymore, but she mumbles that the story is about love. They hug, and the film ends with the audience presuming that Alice's condition is deteriorating (Genova 20).

There are a number of health ethical issues addressed in the film. For instance, the framing of the film does not portray any moral worth but only acts as just any other source of entertainment for its audience. Many people tend to argue that the film is a good thing in itself, but exploiting serious sickness for dramatic entertainment rather than any moral perspective is a serious ethical issue that is portrayed in the movie. Regardless of the fact that the producer of the film exploited a serious

disease to produce a drama film, he was allowed to produce and sell the film without the government taking any steps (Prince et al. 10). The scenes portrayed in the film could be hurting other people who have lost their loved ones due to the condition.

Patients suffering from the disease get access to a number of resources from the Alzheimer's Association. For instance, the patients are provided with programs and events such as support groups and education programs like the one offered to Anna after she was discovered to be carrying the gene and access to special events for individuals with early memory loss to help entertain the individuals before their condition gets worse. The patients are also provided with care at home, as seen in Alice's case. The family members of those affected with the disease get the links to access the resources set aside for those with Alzheimer's disease (Wimo et al. 390). This ranges from transport to home health care and neurologists who will help manage the condition.

People sometimes fear Alzheimer's disease more than cancer. Even other cultures consider the condition to be taboo, and therefore, family members won't even talk that a member of the family has been diagnosed with the disease. Therefore, governments should come up with policies that protect those diagnosed with the disease. Additionally, the healthcare sector should come up with campaigns to educate the public about the disease and how it can be managed (Heese135). Other than that, the government should enact policies to take care of the elderly people who are most often affected by the disease.

Caring for people suffering from Alzheimer's disease can be difficult if they are living in their own homes, and it raises a lot of ethical and legal issues. The concept of autonomy should be balanced with their well-being and safety. Legal issues come in when it comes to treatment decisions that must comply with the specific set rules and regulations. Therefore, medical practitioners and nurses should then follow all the rules and regulations when dealing with all patients, including those with Alzheimer's disease (Heese135). Additionally, the concept of autonomy and respecting choices should always apply so as to avoid developing an ethical dilemma that may lead to a lawsuit by the medical facility or even the family members. Nurses should respect the choices of the patients regardless of the fact that they don't remember anything.

Works Cited

Genova, Lisa. *Still Alice: Caring for Those at the Edge of Society*, 2014. 1-293

Heese, Klaus. "Ageing, dementia, and society–an epistemological perspective." *SpringerPlus* 4.1 (2015): 135.

Prince, Martin, et al. "World Alzheimer Report 2016: improving healthcare for People living with Dementia: coverage, quality, and costs now and in the Future." (2016).

Wimo, Anders, et al. "The GERAS Study: a prospective observational study of costs and resource use

in community dwellers with Alzheimer's disease in three European countries–study design and baseline findings." *Journal of Alzheimer's disease* 36.2 (2013): 385-399.

https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s40064-015-0910-1