



Life And Death In Intensive Care

Joan Cassell

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Life and Death in Intensive Care offers a unique portrait of the surgical intensive care unit (SICU), the place in medical centers and hospitals where patients with the gravest medical conditions—from comas to terminal illness—are treated. Author Joan Cassell employs the concept of *moral economies* to explain the dilemmas that patients, families, and medical staff confront in treatment. Drawing upon her fieldwork conducted in both the United States and New Zealand, Cassell compares the moral outlooks and underlying principles of SICU nurses, residents, intensivists, and surgeons. Using real life examples, Life and Death in Intensive Care clearly presents the logic and values behind the SICU as well as the personalities, procedures, and pressures that characterize every case. Ultimately, Cassell demonstrates the differing systems of values, and the way cultural definitions of medical treatment inform how we treat the critically ill.

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