

# A Nurses' Reflection on Practice: How Far Have We Come?



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# Key terms

- Nursing ethics,
- Ethical dilemma,
- Fallibility,
- Neonate,
- Quality of life,
- Advocacy,
- Case study approach

# Joanna's story



# What do we mean by quality of life?

- We need to examine our beliefs.
- What was the parents' beliefs?

# What our nursing students thought.

Our 2006 undergraduate nursing students thought that Joanna's quality of life would be poor because-

- other children would not accept her,
- of lack of dignity due to continence problems,
- of the financial, emotional, and physical burden on the parents,

# The email from New York 2006

- Cases such as Joanna's are still causing ethical dilemmas in 2006.

# The issues

- Nursing care considered inferior to medical care,
- Should Joanna have been actively treated, for example with medical intervention right from the very beginning?
- Was the management compassionate or could it have been regarded as attempted infanticide?
- Who takes responsibility for the results of the decisions?

# How far have we come since 1980?

Care of sick newborns and their families have greatly improved since 1980, however the issues of inequality and invisibility of the nurse still remains (Buresh, B. & Gordon, S. 2000).

What I wish I had done at the time?

Would I act differently today?

# How can we be an advocate for these children and their families?

- Nobody is infallible; and for that reason many points of view are needed (Mary Midgley in Johnstone, 2004)

