



GRAND ROUNDS

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA & STOLLERY CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS AND
MAZANKOWSKI ALBERTA HEART INSTITUTE CLINICAL ETHICS
COMMITTEE

“KILLING THE CYBORG: ETHICS AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT”

It has been recently suggested that life-saving therapies such as Ventricular Assist Devices (VADs), particularly when they are used as a destination therapy (as opposed to a bridge to transplant), suggest a new ethical paradigm with relation to a competent patient's request to withdraw treatment. A patient's legal and ethical right to request the withdrawal of burdensome life-saving therapy has been well-established in the last 30 years. The advocates for a new paradigm suggest that destination VADs and other such technologies differ in that the mechanism itself replaces rather than supports critical physiological functions thus creating a 'cyborg', a functioning combination of human and technology. The argument then suggests that it is no more 'ethical' to remove or disable an essential system of a cyborg-patient than it is to remove or disable an essential system of a biological patient and that such an action is equivalent to respecting the request to euthanize a patient.

Date: Friday, 16 December 2011

Time: 12-1 pm

Location: Classroom B (2K1.03) WMC

Presented by: **Dr. Brendan Leier**

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EVERYONE WELCOME!!!

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