



# The Moral Challenge of Alzheimer Disease: Ethical Issues from Diagnosis to Dying

*Stephen G. Post*

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Society today, writes Stephen Post, is "hypercognitive": it places inordinate emphasis on people's powers of rational thinking and memory. Thus, Alzheimer disease and other dementias, which over an extended period incrementally rob patients of exactly those functions, raise many dilemmas. How are we to view?and value?persons deprived of what some consider the most important human capacities?

In the second edition of *The Moral Challenge of Alzheimer Disease*, Post updates his highly praised account of the major ethical issues relating to dementia care. With chapters organized to follow the progression from mild to severe and then terminal stages of dementia, Post discusses topics including the experience of dementia, family caregiving, genetic testing for Alzheimer disease, quality of life, and assisted suicide and euthanasia. New to this edition are sections dealing with end-of-life issues (especially artificial nutrition and hydration), the emerging cognitive-enhancing drugs, distributive justice, spirituality, and hospice, as well as a critique of rationalistic definitions of *personhood*. The last chapter is a new summary of practical solutions useful to family members and professionals.

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