



**ACADEMIC EXAMINATIONS**  
AT THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LISBON  
ADVANCED EDUCATION INSTITUTE

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**Master:** Bioethics (6th Edition)

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**Panel:**

**President:** Professor António Barbosa (FMUL)

**Supervisor:** Professor Paulo Costa (FMUL)

**Voting Member:** Professor Hortense Cotrim (ESSEM)

**Voting Member:** Professor Miguel Oliveira e Silva (FMUL)



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**RESUME**

Initially conceived through a paternalism point of view, the parturient was traditionally looked as someone without any power of decision about the kind of health care she was submitted to. With the increasing recognition of autonomy as important for each human being, the ethical's principle changes from beneficence to autonomy, in a way that the woman in labor gains an increasing autonomy. Nevertheless we must consider a complex ethical dimension, because there is a new life coming, without a legal personality until birth, but with the right of having an ethical dignity.

Trough this study, we were able to understand that the woman's autonomy is feel as something especially and somehow surprising, independently of the point of view paternalist or autonomist. In fact, the analysis of the information allow us to recognize the woman as someone with a need of having not only a simple autonomy, but a shared and frequently delegated one, in the health professionals, in which she trusts that they will act according to the "leges artis".

The main goal of this writing is to do a reflexion of the health professionals' role in a moment as complex as the parturition.

Key words: Autonomy; Parturition; Pregnancy; Paternalism; Knowledge; Attitude; Planning.