INTRODUCTION
The three principles of ethics in healthcare as described by some ethicists are beneficence, justice, and autonomy. To our knowledge, no one has attempted to reconcile these principles to date with classical ethical theory. Industries outside of healthcare have previously applied a tripartite model of analysis to classical ethical theory. Based on this template, we suggest that the three bioethical principles can be roughly corresponded with the ethical theories of utilitarianism, deontology, and virtue ethics. Further distinctions in ethical approaches can be refined at the intersection of these historically separate ideologies.14

BACKGROUND
Emergency response has typically employed a strictly beneficent utilitarian approach, seeking to maximize goodness for the greatest number. The deliberate attempt here is to circumvent procedural limitations that could potentially impede emergency response.15 Medicine began with a strong emphasis on the individual patient, using Hippocratic Ethics. It subsequently moved away from autonomy as a focus and developed a different approach by combining beneficence with the justice principles.16 The modified utilitarian-deontological ethos of rule consequentialism, utilizing beneficence with some of the structure provided by justice theory, is typically what characterizes standard medical care to this day.17

The limitations of operating strictly within the sphere of beneficence are that they can perpetuate injustices by evading impartiality and integrity. Strict beneficence can also provide an impersonal view of life, and ignoring cultural relativism in certain settings is problematic.18

Although rule consequentialism incorporates the procedural safeguards of the justice principle, this approach is also highly susceptible to paternalistic tendencies as it ignores the bioethical principle of autonomy and undermines informed consent and joint decision making.19

SUMMARY
In the modern era a greater emphasis of autonomy has re-emerged with the taking the choices and preferences of patients being taken into consideration.11,12 Client-centered care is taking greater prominence among the medical profession. Medical advances mean that most emergency responses quickly progress to more stable rehabilitative and psychosocial care.20 There is a need for incorporation of these principles of autonomy in emergency medical relief to create a more balanced approach towards emergency medical response.10

Case studies in emergent medical relief has demonstrated that different approaches have respective shortcomings that can be summarized by oversights in ethical principles.21 Dealing with the advantages and limitations of various ethical thought can have practical consequences, both for the training of emergency medical responders, and also in the evaluation of strategic planning. An approach that carefully considers and incorporates the ideals of all ethical perspectives can be a useful tool in emergency medical response.6

REFERENCES

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