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Subject: The Legal and Social Issues Committee on End of Life Choices
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My father Les Webberley, a frail elderly and depressed man, went into Cabrini Hospital Malvern on Saturday 1st August 2015.

Early in the morning on Monday 3rd of August 2015, dad first admitted to me that the consultant doctor had planned to starve him to death, presumably with Les' permission. On this, the third day of the starvation regime, Les was desperate for food and drink. I explained to my father that food by mouth had been banned by the hospital, so Les and I agreed to have a tube inserted.

That same day I had a long discussion with Palliative Care Prof Natasha Michael about whether Jewish medical-legal ethics could be upheld in a Catholic hospital and she honestly believed that Jewish and Catholic medical ethics were the same. When I suggested that didn't feel correct to me, this wonderful and sympathetic palliative care doctor advised I get a rabbi's ruling. Les also begged me to get a ruling from the rabbi, as quickly as possible.

I asked for and received a ruling from the appropriate rabbi that very day. Rabbi M Stern said that if the patient wanted to die (as my father Les clearly had indeed wanted since February), the physician may withdraw surgical intervention and medical treatments, but he could UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE withhold oxygen, water or food (or nutrition via a tube if feeding by mouth was impossible). If the doctor withheld the nutrition anyhow, the doctor may have acted legally in providing mercy killing, but he breached the most basic of Jewish laws.

The doctor's (Hooke) response was that he didn't give an (expletive) about anyone's opinion except the patient and the doctor, including any (expletive) rabbi. This put Les and me in an intolerable situation, breaching Jewish law at the time when Les was facing old age, death, meeting God and reconnecting with his late wife. Les was devastated.

Les most certainly was so depressed after his wife's death and definitely did not want to live on alone. But he begged and wept for food and drink by just the third day of the starvation plan. He made me promise, on my mother's grave, that I would stop Hooke's starvation plan.

Now I have to live forever with the knowledge that I did not protect my beloved father during the day and a half (Monday 3rd Aug all day and the morning of Tuesday 4th August 2015) of his begging for my help. I need an explanation and an apology for the torture (Les' word) that I had to watch. But

mostly as
executor of his will, I now need to fulfil Les' request to save
other frail
elderly patients from brutal starvation.

End of Life Choices need to leave the patient with dignity and com-
fort;
withdrawing nutrition and drink must never be allowed again.

