

Epistemic Care and Epistemic Paternalism

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Abstract: Epistemic care can be understood as a form of care that aims to meet epistemic needs. What is the relationship between epistemic care and epistemic paternalism? To what extent is epistemic care compatible with epistemic paternalism? Can some epistemically paternalistic acts be considered instances of epistemic care? After defining the notions of epistemic care and epistemic paternalism, I will argue that the two phenomena are related in the following way: an epistemically paternalistic act is justified if it is an instance of proper epistemic care.

Introduction

Caring practices, such as those involved in parenting, health care or teaching, have epistemic dimensions. In raising our kids, we not only give them physical, emotional and social support, but also transmit them a lot of practical and propositional knowledge as well as other epistemic goods. In treating their patients, clinicians not only improve the well-being of their patients, but also inform them of their diseases, possible treatments, the risks they involve, and alternative therapies. Finally, although not of all its aspects are epistemic, teaching is a paradigmatic form of *epistemic care*.

Such caring practices often involve *epistemically paternalistic acts*, i.e., paternalistic acts aimed at making the subjects involved epistemically better off. Some examples of epistemically paternalistic acts include:

- Keeping a joke history book out of reach of your kids to prevent that they form false beliefs about history (Pritchard 2013: 27).
- Enrolling your son in college and paying for his tuition fees without letting him know to ensure that he keeps studying (Croce 2018: 305).
- Requiring the use of prediction models in clinical practice to make clinicians less susceptible to biases (Ahlstrom-Vij 2013: Ch. 6).
- Giving unwanted medical information to a patient (Bullock 2016: 3).
- Teaching false or incomplete theories to students in order to facilitate a better understanding of more complex theories (Bullock 2016: 2).

What is the relationship between epistemic care and epistemic paternalism? To what extent is epistemic care compatible with epistemic paternalism? Can some epistemically paternalistic acts be considered instances of epistemic care? To answer these questions, I will first give a brief characterization of the notions of epistemic care and epistemic paternalism. Then, after presenting some views in the literature about the justification of epistemically paternalistic acts, I will put forward my own positive proposal, which will show a relevant way in which epistemic care relates to epistemic paternalism: an epistemically paternalistic act is justified if it is an instance of proper epistemic care.

Epistemic care

The phenomenon of care, in general, has been widely investigated in *care ethics*, a collection of approaches to ethics closely related to (if not overlapping with) feminist ethics that emphasize the moral and political significance of relationships, and especially of the attitudes and actions involved in personal relationships where a person fulfils the needs or interests of dependent or vulnerable persons she is responsible for, and towards whom she has duties of care.

In general, caring can be understood as a kind of practice whose range of application are relations of *dependence* (Collins 2015: Ch. 6). Accordingly, the following seems to hold true of care in general: (i) B, the care-receiver, has an unfilled need E; (ii) A, the care-giver, is in a better position *vis-à-vis* E than A; (iii) B depends on A to fulfil E.

As Berenice Fisher and Joan Tronto argue in their 1990 seminal paper, caring is a multifaceted phenomenon that involves several phases: *caring about others* (noticing their needs), *caring for them* (taking responsibility to ensure that these needs are met), *care-giving* (the actual care-giving work), and *care-receiving* (the response of the care-giver to the response of the care-receiver).¹ In this way, care, or at least proper care, not only involves the kind of *caring actions* that are relevant to giving and receiving care, but also certain *caring attitudes* on behalf of the care-giver (such as the attitude of caring about others). These actions and attitudes, if not necessary for care, are at least necessary for *proper* care.

Similarly, some authors (e.g., Engster 2005; Tronto 1993) think that care (or proper care for that matter) requires that care-givers manifest certain *virtues of caring* along the caring process. Tronto (1993), in particular, distinguishes four specific virtues corresponding to the caring-about, caring-for, care-giving and care-receiving phases. They are, in corresponding order: *attentiveness* (the disposition to proactively notice unmet caring needs and empathy for the care-receiver); *responsibility* (the willingness to take on the burden of meeting those needs); *competence* (skills and abilities needed to give successful care reliably); and *responsiveness* (the disposition to monitor the care-receiver's response after care is given and make adjustments if care is insufficient or improper).²

Epistemic care can be understood along the same lines, with the only main difference that the relevant needs are epistemic. In this way, the range of application of the practice of epistemic care are relations of *epistemic dependence*, such that (i) B, the epistemic care-receiver, has an unfilled epistemic need E; (ii) A, the epistemic care-giver, is in a better epistemic position *vis-à-vis* E than B; and (iii) B depends on A to fulfil E.³ We should also expect (as we will see) that the same kind of actions, attitudes and virtues that are considered necessary for care, are also necessary for epistemic care—or at least for *proper* epistemic care.⁴

¹ Tronto (2013) adds a posterior *caring-with-others* phase, which she defines as requiring “that caring needs and the ways in which they are met need to be consistent with democratic commitments to justice, equality, and freedom for all” (Tronto 2013: 23).

² Engster (2005) adds *respect* to the list of virtues of caring, which he defines as the recognition that the care-receiver is worthy of attention and responsiveness.

³ For a taxonomy of types of epistemic dependence, see Broncano-Berrocal & Vega-Encabo (2019).

⁴ For instance, although the needs they aim to fulfil are different, the virtues needed to monitor an epistemic need (such as lack of knowledge) and the ones needed to monitor a non-epistemic need (such as lack of health) are of the same *kind*, i.e., need-monitoring virtues.

Notice that the fact that epistemic care can be distinguished as a phenomenon in itself, at least conceptually, does not mean that, in practice, it is found in isolation. On the contrary, epistemic care often occurs in the context of more general caring practices, i.e., practices whose aims, and the needs they aim to meet, are not exclusively epistemic. To see this, let's consider some examples of epistemic care.

A person with a life-threatening infectious disease has the objective need to survive, but also the *epistemic need to know* what her condition and her life prospects are. In this way, a clinician may not only give health care to that person (e.g., by prescribing antibiotics), but also epistemic care by informing her patient about her condition and the effectiveness of the treatment. We also care for our kids, simpliciter, when we install socket covers at home, but also care for them *epistemically* when we let them *know* and make them *understand* why putting their fingers in an electrical socket is a dangerous activity. Teaching also involves a lot of care (such as ensuring that no one is left behind or that no injustices or abuses are committed among students) but also a great dose of epistemic care, which as any teacher or professor knows, not only consists in transferring knowledge or promoting understanding among one's students (e.g., by explaining to them what the main questions and answers in a certain field are), but also in facilitating that they develop a number of cognitive abilities and intellectual virtues such as curiosity, intellectual thoroughness or the skill of critical thinking, so they are able to ask the relevant questions and find the relevant answers for themselves.

In this way, the relevant *epistemic needs* of epistemic care include the *achievement of epistemic standings* (such as knowledge, understanding or justified belief) and the *development of cognitive abilities and intellectual virtues*. Epistemic care can be thus defined as a form of care that aims to meet these epistemic needs.

Epistemic paternalism

In his monograph on the topic, Kristoffer Ahlstrom-Vij (2013) offers the following definition of epistemic paternalism, which is itself inspired in Dworkin's general definition of paternalism (Dworkin 2010):⁵

- A acts epistemically paternalistically towards B by doing (omitting) Φ if and only if:
- (1) Φ interferes with B's freedom to conduct inquiry in whatever way she sees fit (*the interference condition*).
 - (2) A does (omits) Φ without consulting B on the issue of whether she should be interfered with in the relevant manner (*the non-consultation condition*).
 - (3) A does (omits) Φ for the purpose of making those interfered with epistemically better off (*the improvement condition*).

In some cases of epistemic paternalism, however, the non-consultation condition does not hold. This gives us reason to drop the non-consultation condition—or any condition that invokes lack of consent for that matter—from the definition of epistemic paternalism. As Shane Ryan (2016; 2018) argues more generally in the case of paternalism:

⁵ For another seminal work on epistemic paternalism, see Goldman (1991).

[A Victorian] husband may put a stop to visits to his wife by a cousin who he regards as a bad influence on his wife. Even though he does this irrespective of the wishes of his wife, it may be the case that his wife also wishes that these visits end. That she also wishes this to happen doesn't undercut the intuition that the husband's action is paternalistic. (Ryan 2018: 64)

According to Ryan (2018), what makes the Victorian husband's action paternalistic is not that it involves lack of consent (or consultation), but its preemptory nature; the husband does not act conditional on or because of his wife's wishes, but irrespective of them. Another way to put it is this: the husband is *insensitive* to his wife's wishes in that, had they been different (e.g., if the wife had wished that her cousin did visit her), her husband would have acted in the same way.

The crux of the matter is that this kind of insensitivity that makes the husband's action paternalistic is both compatible with the wife actually consenting to the action and with being consulted upon it by him. After all, the husband would have acted in the same way regardless of whether or not his wife offered consent or whatever his wife's answer to his consultation was.

We can easily come up with analogous counterexamples involving epistemic paternalism. Just replace the cousin's visits in the previous example with a feminist book on the structural causes of women's oppression. The Victorian wife plausibly has the objective epistemic need to know about such causes (even if it might not be her wish).⁶ Yet this is something that her husband prevents her from knowing when paternalistically getting rid of the book in the belief that what the book says is false and hence in the belief that it is on his wife's best epistemic interest not to read it. Such an action remains paternalistic even if the husband consults his wife about it, or even if she consents to it, so long as he would have acted in the same way had his wife's answer been different or had she refused to offer consent.

To avoid this kind of problem, Ryan (2016) offers a more comprehensive definition of paternalism which we can adapt for the more specific case of epistemic paternalism. Here is Ryan's definition of paternalism:

A acts paternalistically towards B by doing (omitting) Φ if and only if:

- (1) A does so irrespective of what A believes the wishes of B may be.
- (2) A does so just because A has a positive epistemic standing (e.g., a belief, a suspicion) that Φ may or will improve the welfare of B (where this includes preventing B's welfare from diminishing), or in some way promote the interests, values or good of B.

Notice that Ryan not only drops the non-consultation (or lack-of-consent) condition from his definition, but, unlike Dworkin's definition of paternalism (Dworkin 2010)—from which Ahlstrom-Vij's definition of epistemic paternalism derives—it no longer considers necessary

⁶ We sometimes have objective epistemic needs that are opposite to our subjective preferences. For example, one has the objective epistemic need to know that if one continues drinking, one is going to die soon because of liver failure even though one is too afraid to acknowledge this and hence even though one explicitly refuses to know it.

that the freedom or autonomy of the agent is interfered with, because there are plausible cases of paternalistic acts where this does not happen.⁷ Instead, he thinks that condition (2) already implies that there can be cases of paternalistic acts that threaten the freedom or autonomy of the interfered agent, while permitting cases of paternalism in which this is not the case. Ryan's more permissive definition of paternalism can be thus used to define epistemic paternalism as follows:

- A acts epistemically paternalistically towards B by doing (omitting) Φ if and only if:
- (1) A does so irrespective of what A believes the wishes of B may be concerning whether and how to conduct inquiry.
 - (2) A does so just because A has a positive epistemic standing (e.g., a belief, a suspicion) that Φ may or will make B epistemically better off (where this includes preventing B's epistemic position from diminishing), or in some way promote the epistemic goals of B.

The examples of epistemic paternalism detailed in the first section satisfy both conditions of the definition. In addition, they are also satisfied in the epistemic version of the Victorian wife case: (1) the husband gets rid of the book irrespective of what he believes his wife's wishes may be concerning whether and how to conduct inquiry on the structural causes of women's oppression; (2) the husband does so because he believes that getting rid of the book, whose contents he believes to be false, will prevent his wife's epistemic position from diminishing.

The justification of epistemic paternalism

A number of epistemologists uphold the view that, under certain conditions, it is justified to interfere with the inquiry of other agents for their own epistemic good regardless of what one believes their wishes may be concerning whether and how to conduct inquiry. Some of the conditions that have been defended or discussed in the literature include the following:

It is morally permissible that A acts epistemically paternalistically towards B by doing (omitting) Φ if:

- *Expert condition*: A is an expert on the relevant field of inquiry (Goldman 1991).
- *Virtue condition*: A is a virtuous paternalistic interferer for B, where this involves (among other things) displaying a wide range of novice-oriented abilities in judging how to intervene (Croce 2018).
- *Balancing-goods condition*: A is justified in believing that doing (omitting) Φ case is *not* or will *not* be all-things-considered worse off for B, compared to relevant alternatives to Φ (Ahlstrom-Vij 2013; Bullock 2016).
- *Alignment condition*: A's epistemic reasons for doing (omitting) Φ are aligned with her non-epistemic reasons in the sense that they are (a) both reasons for doing

⁷ See below for some examples; cf. also Shiffrin (2000: 213)

(omitting) Φ or, (b) if not-(a), they are silent on the issue by not constituting reasons for doing (omitting) Φ (Ahlstrom-Vij 2013: 117).

- *Burden-of-proof condition*: A is justified in believing that it is highly likely that doing (omitting) Φ makes or will make B epistemically better off, compared to relevant alternatives to Φ (Ahlstrom-Vij 2013: 122).

Here is not the place to adjudicate between these views.⁸ Instead, in what follows, I will propose my own view, which shares some features with the views advanced by Ahlstrom-Vij (2013) and Croce (2018).⁹

Morally permissible epistemic paternalism as proper epistemic care

Consider some fairly clear examples of morally permissible paternalistic acts from Ryan (2016) along with corresponding cases in the epistemic domain. As I will suggest, the examples seem to share a common factor: they involve some form of (epistemic or non-epistemic) care. Accordingly, my proposal will be that what makes a case of (epistemic or non-epistemic) paternalism morally permissible is precisely that. This will show a relevant way in which epistemic care and epistemic paternalism are related.

Paternalistic acts¹⁰

Not buying alcohol for someone who looks like they've already had too much to drink.

Not accepting an expensive gift from a friend who wants to give you that gift but who you know can ill-afford it.

Not sleeping with someone who wants to sleep with you because one suspects he or she could easily get hurt as a result of the action.

Reporting a person to the police in the belief that it will be better for that person if she is stopped now before she is caught doing

Epistemically paternalistic acts

Not buying a creationist book for someone who is beginning to show creationist inclinations.

Not accepting your older brother's offer to help you prepare for your first-year final exams when you know he barely has time to prepare for his own last-year finals.

Not talking to someone who wants to talk with you about a complex topic you are not familiar with because you suspect that that person could easily get confused about it as a result of the interaction.

Reporting a classmate to a professor for having plagiarized a minor class assignment

⁸ For criticism of the expert condition, see Croce (2018). For criticism of the balancing-goods condition, see Ahlstrom-Vij (2013) and Bullock (2016). For criticism of the alignment condition, see Bullock (2016).

⁹ For Ahlstrom-Vij (2013), the alignment condition *and* the burden-of-proof condition are jointly sufficient for an epistemically paternalistic act to count as morally permissible. Croce (2018) upholds the virtue condition and thinks that it entails the alignment and the burden-of-proof conditions, but also that it can account for some cases that Ahlstrom-Vij's view is unable to explain (see the case involving luck below).

¹⁰ Examples from Ryan (2016: 127–8). Ryan thinks that these are cases where the freedom or autonomy of the interfered agents is not violated, which explains why the intuition that they are justified is stronger than in other cases. Instead (albeit not unrelatedly), I think that what strengthens such an intuition is the fact that they involve care.

something worse.

in the belief that she will be epistemically better off if she stops cheating at the beginning of the term than if she continues to do it for the whole course.

Providing support for a friend who has asked not to be helped.

Explaining the basics of logic to a friend who is struggling to pass a logic course but who has asked not to be helped (e.g., because he is too proud to admit that he needs your help).

Prepaying for a doctor's appoint for one's elderly and ill parent because it seems the only way to get that parent to agree to see a doctor—she doesn't like the idea of money being wasted.

Enrolling your son in college and paying for his tuition fees because it seems the only way to get him to agree to keep studying—he believes, falsely, that he is a bad student and doesn't like the idea of money being wasted.

Although some of the previous examples might need further details, it seems that all of them involve caring actions and attitudes. For instance, when explaining the basics of logic to your proud friend, you *care for*, among other things, your friend's epistemic position concerning logical matters. In addition, because you *care about* your son's education, you enroll him in college. In these kinds of cases, it seems morally permissible to take such epistemically paternalistic actions for the sake of ameliorating the impoverished epistemic positions of the people you care about. This helps motivate the following view:

Epistemic care condition: It is morally permissible that A acts epistemically paternalistically towards B by doing (omitting) Φ if Φ is an instance of proper epistemic care on A's behalf.

What it takes for epistemic care to be proper? As we have seen, care, in general, and epistemic care, in particular, involve several phases: caring-about, caring-for, care-giving and care-receiving. We can think proper (epistemic) care as necessarily involving all of them. Accordingly, in a situation in which B (the epistemic care-receiver) has an unfilled epistemic need E, A (the epistemic care-giver) is in a better epistemic position *vis-à-vis* E than B, and B depends on A to fulfil E, A's action (or omission) Φ is an instance of proper epistemic care for B only if:

- (1) A notices E (*caring about*)
- (2) A takes responsibility to ensure that E is met (*caring for*).
- (3) Φ significantly contributes to the fulfillment of E (*care-giving*).
- (4) As a result of (1)-(3), E no longer represents an epistemic need for B (*care-receiving*).

However, while (1)-(4) seem necessary for proper epistemic care, they are not jointly sufficient. To start with, just as Ahlstrom-Vij (2013) argues in the case of epistemic

paternalism, B's epistemic reasons for epistemically caring for A (helping A meet her epistemic needs) might not be aligned with her non-epistemic reasons, which could in fact be reasons for the opposite aim (i.e., not helping A fulfill her epistemic needs). Here is Ahlstrom-Vij's reasoning concerning epistemic paternalism:

We can imagine a government with such complete control over government organs, news media outlets, educational institutions and so on that it is able to mandate the use of nothing but the most reliable scientific methods in virtually every domain of life, and remove from public consumption any misleading or biasing information. It might be that this would do epistemic wonders for the citizenry, and the government might to that extent be motivated to exercise the relevant form of control on epistemic grounds. But if so, what is it that stops the government, or any other sufficiently powerful body for that matter, from going for anything short of an extremely strict epistemic regiment, forcing everyone to strive for epistemic perfection? (...) [W]e might have non-epistemic reason against having a government exercise epistemic paternalism on such a great scale (Ahlstrom-Vij 2013: 115).

A government constantly monitoring the epistemic needs of citizens and reliably meeting them at the cost of their welfare can be hardly described as caring about or as caring for its citizens, epistemically or not. This is because in forcing everyone to strive for epistemic perfection injustices (epistemic or non) are committed, and committing injustices is incompatible with caring. To amend this kind of problem, Ahlstrom-Vij puts forward the alignment condition for justified epistemic paternalism. It seems reasonable to understand proper epistemic care as requiring the same kind of condition. In this way, A's action (or omission) Φ is an instance of proper epistemic care for B only if:

(5) A's epistemic reasons for doing (omitting) Φ are aligned with her non-epistemic reasons in the sense that they are (a) both reasons for doing (omitting) Φ or, (b) if not-(a), they are silent on the issue by not constituting reasons for doing (omitting) Φ .¹¹

However, conditions (1)-(5) are still not jointly sufficient for an action to represent an instance of proper epistemic care. The reason is that they might hold by luck. This especially applies to condition (3), i.e., it can be the case that (1), (2), (4) and (5) hold, A does (or omits) Φ , Φ significantly contributes to the fulfillment of B's epistemic need E—so (3) holds too—and yet Φ cannot be considered an instance of proper epistemic care because E is met by luck. Consider the following case by Croce (2018):

A doctor breaks a patient's right not to know the result of a medical test, because she has a justified belief that the patient will benefit from knowing that he is in good

¹¹ Bullock (2016) argues that a so formulated alignment condition might be too restrictive in the case of epistemic paternalism, as Ahlstrom-Vij (2013) acknowledges. It might be overly restrictive in the case of epistemic care too. To fix this, (5) can be side-constrained with the following clause: (c) unless the epistemic and non-epistemic benefits of doing (omitting) Φ outweigh the non-epistemic harms. See Bullock (2016) for further discussion.

health. Unbeknownst to her, someone replaced the result of the test with someone else's. As it turns out, the two tests had identical results (Croce 2018: 320).

Let's assume that the patient has the objective epistemic need to form a justified true belief about the results of the test. The doctor's action significantly contributes to meet such a need: by reading the (coincidentally accurate) results of a test the doctor has very good reason to consider reliable, the patient forms a justified true belief as a result—condition (3) is thus satisfied. However, the doctor's epistemically paternalistic action can neither be considered a morally permissible action—after all, as Croce (2018) points out, the doctor's beliefs about the patient's health situation and the best way to intervene are true just because of luck—, nor an instance of proper epistemic care—given the luck in play, too easily could the doctor have transmitted a false belief to the patient, thus diminishing her epistemic position.

Croce (2018) argues that cases of this sort motivate virtue-like conditions for justified epistemic paternalism (cf. his virtue condition in §4). Likewise, it seems reasonable to think proper epistemic care as requiring that epistemic care-givers manifest certain virtues of epistemic caring. As we have seen in §2, certain virtues of caring have been proposed in the care ethics literature: *attentiveness*, *responsibility*, *competence* and *responsiveness*. Epistemic virtues of caring are not different in kind, but only in the kind of goals they aim to promote.

In this way, to prevent lucky cases, we can include in our analysis of proper epistemic care a condition to the effect that the epistemic care-giver's action does not count as proper epistemic care unless its success in helping improve the epistemic position of the care-receiver (or in helping prevent it from diminishing) is due to or because of the exercise of her *epistemic care-giving competences* or *skills*. We can accordingly modify condition (3) as follows:

(3)* Φ significantly contributes to the fulfillment of E because of the exercise of A's *epistemic care-giving skills* (i.e., A's reliable dispositions to give epistemic care).

What about condition (1)? What if the care-giver notices the care-receiver's epistemic needs by sheer luck? *At least for sustained practices of epistemic care*, we cannot talk of proper epistemic care unless the relevant epistemic needs are noticed virtuously, not by luck.¹² We can accordingly modify condition (1) as follows:

(1)* A notices E because of the A's *attentiveness* (i.e., A's disposition to proactively notice unmet epistemic needs and empathy for B).

Similar considerations apply to condition (2). Here is the modified virtue-theoretic version:

(2)* A takes responsibility to ensure that E is met because of A's being disposed and willing to take on such a burden.

¹² We can *perhaps* talk of proper care (epistemic or non) in cases in which a need is noticed fortuitously (not out of virtue) on a given occasion and competent and just care is given afterwards. However, if in giving sustained care the agent regularly fails to notice unmet needs, we can hardly talk of *proper* care. Thus, the existence such one-time instances of proper care does not mean that proper care does not require virtuously noticing the relevant needs.

Concerning the virtue of responsiveness (i.e., the disposition to monitor the care-receiver's response after care is given and make adjustments if care is insufficient or improper), we can plausibly modify condition (4) as follows:

(4)* As a result of (1)*-(3)*, E no longer represents an epistemic need for B, and if E still represents (to some extent) an epistemic need for B, A manifests *responsiveness* by noticing it and making adjustments.

This completes our analysis of proper epistemic care. To summarize:

In a situation in which B (the epistemic care-receiver) has an unfilled epistemic need E, A (the epistemic care-giver) is in a better epistemic position *vis-à-vis* E than B, and B depends on A to fulfil E, A's action (or omission) Φ is an instance of proper epistemic care for B if only if:

(1)* A notices E because of the A's *attentiveness* (i.e., A's disposition to proactively notice unmet epistemic needs and empathy for B).

(2)* A takes responsibility to ensure that E is met because of A's being disposed and willing to take on such a burden.

(3)* Φ significantly contributes to the fulfillment of E because of the exercise of A's *epistemic care-giving skills* (i.e., A's reliable dispositions to give epistemic care).

(4)* As a result of (1)*-(3)*, E no longer represents an epistemic need for B, and if E still represents (to some extent) an epistemic need for B, A manifests *responsiveness* by noticing it and making adjustments.

(5) A's epistemic reasons for doing (omitting) Φ are aligned with her non-epistemic reasons in the sense that they are (a) both reasons for doing (omitting) Φ or, (b) if not-(a), they are silent on the issue by not constituting reasons for doing (omitting) Φ .

In light of this analysis, to know whether a given case is a case of proper epistemic care, we need to know details concerning the virtues of the epistemic care-giver and whether, if possessed, they are manifested in the relevant caring actions. In the epistemic version of the Victorian husband case, the morally impermissible epistemically paternalistic action of the husband does not obviously count as proper epistemic care mainly because the husband is not attentive (or sensitive) to his wife's epistemic needs: he would have acted in the same way irrespective of what those needs are. Other cases, such as the parents enrolling their son in university also plausibly count as instances of proper epistemic care, as we may suppose that the parents are attentive, responsible, competent and responsive epistemic care-givers in so acting. In keeping with the epistemic care condition for justified epistemic paternalism, such an action counts as morally permissible. Similar considerations can be offered about the other cases in the right column of the table at the beginning of the section, which are plausibly cases of morally permissible epistemic paternalism too.

Obviously, proper epistemic care not only involves epistemically paternalistic acts. It often involves acts that are not paternalistic. But if the acts of caring are epistemically

paternalistic, and they still count as proper epistemic care, they are morally permissible. In addition, there might be morally permissible epistemically paternalistic acts that are not cases of proper epistemic care—the view only states a sufficient condition for justified epistemic paternalism, not a necessary one. Be that as it may, epistemically paternalistic cases of proper epistemic care set the baseline for the moral permissibility of epistemic paternalism. Cases of epistemic paternalism that fall short in some respect of proper epistemic care may still be justified, but are less clearly justified than cases that don't. This, at any rate, is the view that I have put forward in this paper.

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