

SIR - The Supreme Court has ruled that, when families and doctors are in agreement, medical staff will be able to remove feeding tubes from patients in a permanent vegetative state without applying to the Court of Protection (report, July 30).

Our long-standing nursing concerns about the dangers of the Mental Capacity Act (2005), the Bland decision and discredited Liverpool Care Pathway practices have been justified and increased by this ruling.

Another young man, badly injured like Tony Bland in the Hillsborough disaster, and deemed to be persistently unresponsive, heard his mother insist to hospital staff that they continue his treatment and was so grateful to hear this. He eventually recovered.

Food and fluid are basic human rights. The Mental Capacity Act, incredibly, defines "treatment" as: any "diagnostic or other procedure". This opens the door to inhumane practice, where the basic needs of a vulnerable person are considered dispensible and denied them when they have no chance to express hunger and thirst.

Defeatist healthcare gives way to demands for the death of the vulnerable. Their deaths can be very convenient in straitened economic times with fallible human beings making decisions.

The following principle should be morally binding: to kill or make an attempt on the life of an innocent person, is an evil action.

The slippery slope takes over when ideology trumps positive medicine and true patient advocacy.

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