



Living with Uncertainty: The Moral Significance of Ignorance ^[Book Review]

Michael Zimmerman

Analysis 69 (4):785-787 (2009)

Abstract

Michael J. Zimmerman offers a conceptual analysis of the moral 'ought' that focuses on moral decision-making under uncertainty. His central case, originally presented by Frank Jackson, concerns a doctor who must choose among three treatments for a minor ailment. Her evidence suggests that drug B will partially cure her patient, that one of either drug A or C would cure him completely, but that the other drug would kill him. Accepting the intuition that the doctor ought to choose drug B, Zimmerman argues that moral obligation consists in performing the action that is 'prospectively best,' that is 'that which, from the moral point of view, it is most reasonable for the agent to choose' given the evidence available to her at the time. Zimmerman defends his Prospective View of moral obligation against two main competitors in the long, first chapter of the book. According to the Objective View, a person ought to choose what is, in fact, the best option. The doctor ought to give her patient whichever drug will actually cure him. The fact that the doctor cannot know whether this is drug ...

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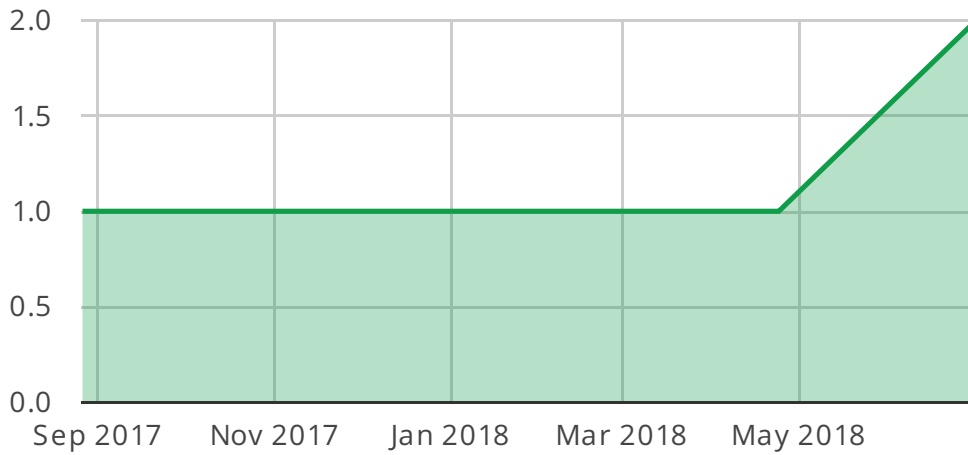
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