Mia Svantesson is a registered nurse, specialized in intensive care and pain management. Besides doctoral studies since 2003 at Örebro University, the author currently works as a pain nurse at Örebro University Hospital and since 2006 also with the building of a palliative consulting team for the hospital and communities in the western part of Örebro county.

All through clinical practice on surgical ward, emergency room, American nursing home, ICU and pain consulting on general wards, the experience of overtreatment of dying patients has troubled the author. Instead of leaving health care work, the author decided to deal with this issue through research.

The decision to continue or limit life-sustaining treatment is the paramount ethical issue in hospital care. This entails great responsibility for the physicians, but also affects the executors of these decisions, the nurses. There are reports of nurses’ disagreements with physicians for pushing life-sustaining treatment too far. A common goal for the care of patients is essential, and thus, studying nurse-physician perspectives on the boundaries for life-sustaining treatment is important. Furthermore, lack of communication is seen as a major cause for conflicts regarding life-sustaining treatment, and therefore, seeking a way to improve end-of-life communication between nurses and physicians are also important.

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