Welcome to Ethics: Dilemmas of a Different Kind

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Chair of Hospital Ethics Committee:
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The World(s) of Ethics

- The Kind of Person one is (Character)
- The Values, Principles, Procedures Held
- Methodology in Ethics
- Religious, non-religious Ground-of-Meaning Beliefs, Loyalties
Core Competencies in Medicine

- Professionalism, Ethics
- Principles and Concepts
- Training in Bioethics
- Board Exam Questions
- Certification, Licensing
- CME studies
Case: Dilemma in the ICU

- End-of-Life Care/treatment
- 77 y/o man with MI; grim prognosis
  - Multi-organ failure, hypotensive, edema, jaundice
  - No Advance Directive
- Dilemma: Doctors see treatment as non-beneficial, burdensome
- Proxy is mother; 3 sisters; full code
- Resolved: patient moved nearer home
Roles, Tasks of the HEC

- Education
- Case Consultation
- Policy Development
What HEC does not do

- RX Consultation—this is the attending’s decision
- HEC is not a sergeant-at-arms
- HEC is not a referral agency for attorneys
Approaches to Clinical Ethics

- Interdisciplinary
- Non-judgmental
- Conflict Resolution
- Consensus Building
- No treatment decisions

Aim: assure proper decision maker, informed consent, non-coercive, consistent with law and standards of care
Composition of the HEC

- Interdisciplinary, multi-professional:
  - Physicians, nurses
  - Hospital Administrators
  - Risk Managers
  - Attorneys
  - Chaplains
  - Philosophers/Theologians
A Schematic Perspective

- Understanding the dynamics of Disagreements
- An Awareness of Authorities
- The Interplay of Power & Influence
- Agreements follow the best Insights for Patient Care
  - Patient Preferences
  - Patient Interests
Consults and Help on-line

- Go to www.uoflhealthcare.org
- Policies:
  - Brain Death: Definition, Determination
  - Care of the Dying Patient
  - Patient Autonomy
  - HIV Testing
- Physician Guidance
- “Paper” Consults
Education: Staff and Public

- Posted Guidelines
- Retreats: Faculty/Staff
- Grand Rounds
  - Family: Fri., 7:30 a.m. Bottigheimer Aud, Jewish Hospital
  - Other Learning Opportunities
Other Educational Forums

- Symposia
- Gheens Lectures
- Stambaugh Lecture Series
- Core Conferences
- Specialty Rounds
The Right to Refuse Treatment

- Karen Quinlan (1975)
  - Right to withdraw *ventilatory* support
- Baby Doe (IN) Univ Hospital
  - Parental authority re. damaged newborns
- Nancy Cruzan (1989)
  - Right to refuse nutrition, hydration
- Patient Self-Determination Act (PSDA)
  - 1989 patient offered assistance with AD
  - State Law: variations on a theme (OR, WA)
Procedure: when Discussions Reach Stalemate

- Case Review
- Call for Consult from HEC
- Form, information on website
- Call may be from any person who is involved in the case: spouse, proxy, nurse, physician, et al.
Request for Ethics Consult

- Occasion: an impasse on ethics
  - Not all disagreements are ethical
  - Some are medical, pharmaceutical

- Placing the Call
  - Hospital Operator: 562-3000 24/7
  - Medical Staff Office: 562-3546
  - Consults: M.D., Ph.D., etc.
At your Service

- Consults on Call 24/7
  - Team consists of physician and non-MD
  - 1st call: 332-3369
  - 2nd call: 332-6612

- Others on Committee available
  - Attorneys
  - Physicians
  - Risk Manager
  - Chaplains
Best Wishes from your HEC

- May all your conflicts be small
- May your dilemmas be easily resolved
- May your residency be pleasant, productive and personally fulfilling
- May your Attending be Wise, Patient and Attentive