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Objectives

- Define and describe professional ethics and ethical dilemmas related to nursing care of older adults.
- Employ ethical models and principles as frameworks for ethical decision making in gerontological nursing
- Use specific processes and techniques to promote ethical decision making in the care of older patients
- Relate community and societal ethical problems, such as rationing of services, euthanasia, and rights of institutionalized patients, to standards of nursing care of the older adults.
- Analyze individual and family ethical dilemmas and formulate appropriate nursing care measures.



Factors that assure the need for moral reflection

- Most professional who enter the field do so because they want to help people die well
- The approach to death and loss is profoundly stressful for patients, families, and caregivers.

Defining Ethics in Palliative Nursing

- What is Ethics?



Aim of Palliative Care

- To relieve suffering
- Improve quality of life (WHO 2003)

'To help you live until you die'.



Cecily Saunders

Medical consideration is among many considerations related to health and quality of life, and ethical dilemmas often stem from problems of **communication** within the health-care team.

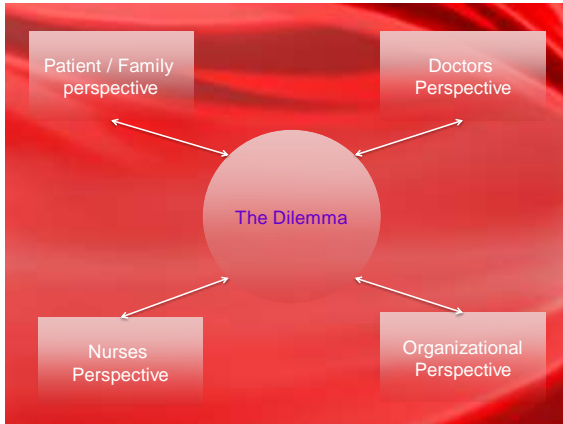
Lloyd 1997
Scott 1995

What is the difference between Acute Care and Palliative Care?



Ethical Dilemmas and Decision Making

Structured Reflections: the use of structured reflection, whereby the key ethical principles of autonomy, justice, beneficence and non-maleficence are applied to the analysis of a complex in the practice of the situation.



Factors influencing Decision-Making Process

- Prognosis of the patient
- Relationship between the health professionals
- Patient
- Family
- Expectations and wishes of the patient

Consider issues like

- Who has the authority to make the decision?
- Who has the power and position to act within the particular situation?
- Is there a clear understanding of how and why these decisions were made?

REFLECTIONS

As a framework for ethical reasoning



Photo Courtesy: Parada, Roberto, Oct. 27, 2008. The New York Times. Retrieved date: January 8, 2013. Retrieved at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/28/health/28book.html>

Reflection Model Element

- Reflection or analysis
- Judgment and action
- Justification and reflection

Ethical problems in end-of-life care

- Withdrawing or withholding treatment
- Unintended but foreseen consequences
- Conflicts of interest – involving dying patients in research
- Extraordinary versus futile treatment



Ethical Theories

- Deontology
- Utilitarianism
- Virtue Ethics

Deontology Ethics

Central idea is the notion of duty – doing what is right.

Immanuel Kant
1724 – 1804

Utilitarianism

Virtue Ethics

Theories may overlap in most discussions around ethical dilemmas in practice.

Assignment

Drawing on your past experiences, reflect on two examples of difficult situations in practice. Apply the framework suggested. Identify possible alternative outcomes to the situations when applying the ethical theories.



Classification of Ethical Principles

- Respect for the individual
- Autonomy
- Justice and utility
- Beneficence
- Non-maleficence

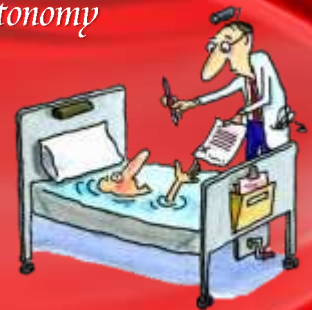
Respect for the Individual

Due regard to the feelings of others, avoiding harm or interference...



Autonomy

Respecting the unique individual and the way they define themselves through the way they live and the values and beliefs they hold.



Justice

In current palliative care provision, there are limited resources, raising the question of fair distribution of these scarce resources.



Underpins the duty to care.

Dilemmas surrounding truth-telling in palliative care often arise not from the rights of patients but from the internal conflict between the nurses own rights and duty to care

Common Ethical Dilemmas in Gerontological Nursing



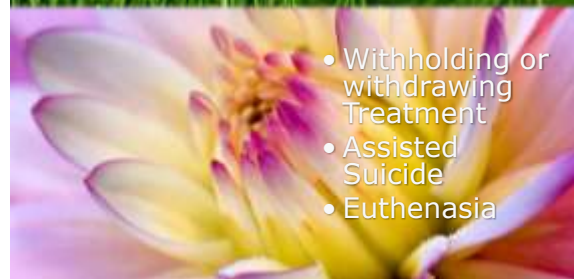
Ethical dilemmas in the care of older people can be identified on many levels, including societal, family and individual.

Decisional Capacity

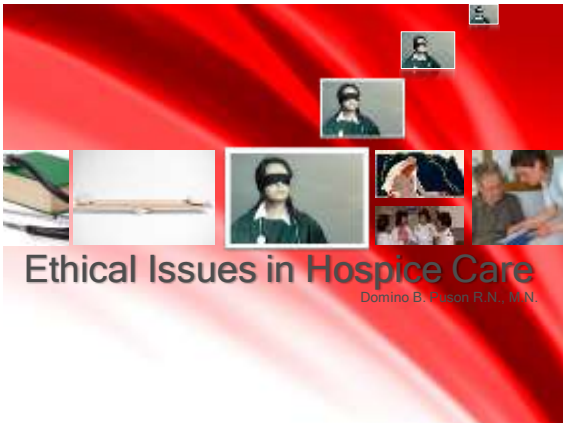


- Comprehension of the information presented or available
- Understanding the options and their choices consistent with ones life values and beliefs
- Communicating a choice

End-of-life Issues



- Withholding or withdrawing Treatment
- Assisted Suicide
- Euthenasia



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