

Ethics

Student Name

Institution

Course Name

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Date of Submission

Ethics

A. Purpose of Assignment

The purpose of this article is to illustrate how to utilise both ethical and moral reasoning to solve an ethical dilemma within the advanced nursing practice. An ethical dilemma in health care arises when a nurse conflicts between their professional obligation and the patient's right to make their own decisions. In such circumstances, nurses must use a logical and principled approach to resolve conflicts by considering both the right of the individual and the responsibility to society (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). The purpose of this analysis will be to assist you in arriving at a good ethical decision using ethical principles and theory.

B. Subject

Summary of the Issue and Primary Ethical Question

A key question about ethics is whether healthcare providers have the obligation to honour a competent patient's choice not to receive life-sustaining treatment. In the case of life-sustaining treatment for a dying patient, nurses must balance their duties to respect the patient's autonomy with their obligation to act in the best interests of the patient and their

family (Lo, 2020). As demonstrated in this case, the different moral interpretations by family members and the healthcare provider(s) make decision-making complex.

C. Form and Method

Facts of the Situation

A 78-year-old man, Mr. James, with end-stage congestive heart failure, was admitted due to multiple readmissions to the hospital. The cardiologist suggested that an implanted cardioverter defibrillator be implanted in Mr. James to reduce the likelihood of experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest and to prolong his life (Sulmasy, 2017). Mr. James turned down this option, explaining that he wanted comfort, peace, and freedom from any additional invasive procedures.

Different Viewpoints and Personal Narratives

The patient believed he had made a clear, conscious choice based on logical reasoning that reflected his long-held values regarding independence. His daughter viewed her father's choice as depression. She wanted a physician to intervene medically to stop her father from dying prematurely. The cardiologist primarily focused on the beneficence aspect of the situation, indicating that previously developed technology will allow individuals to live longer.

Communications and Interactions Among the Parties

Prior to the ethical crisis, communication between Mr. James's family, the cardiology team, and the advanced practice nurse (APN) had been sporadic and inconsistent at best. The family had never met with Mr. James to discuss his advance care preferences; therefore, they were left to interpret Mr. James's intentions based on their own perceptions. The daughter, in particular, began to feel increasingly anxious and distressed, seeing Mr. James's silence as either a form of resignation or of confusion. Additionally, the cardiology team provided only

technical explanations to the family regarding Mr. James's current status; this left the family feeling mistrustful and frustrated, as their emotional needs were not being addressed.

D. Ethical Reasoning and Analysis

Application of the Four Principles

Autonomy obliges healthcare professionals to respect their patients' rights to make informed choices regarding their own personal care, provided the patient possesses the necessary competency. Mr. James demonstrates that he understood the medical limitations of his condition and opted for comfort at the end of life rather than pursuing an extensive series of invasive procedures. The healthcare professionals acted with beneficence to promote Mr. James' well-being; however, beneficence should be based on what the patient considers good and beneficial for them. Non-maleficence requires all health care professionals to avoid causing harm to their patients, including the psychological suffering a patient may experience when undergoing an unwanted intervention.

Relevant Ethical Theories

Deontological ethics guided the nurse's ethical decision by emphasizing the moral obligation to respect individual autonomy. According to Kantian philosophy, an action is only moral when it is motivated by a person's inherent dignity and rationality. Treating a competent patient against their will would be utilitarian and would cause harm to the patient to promote the comfort of others. In contrast, utilitarian reasoning aims to maximize the happiness of the greatest number of people. Ultimately, ethical pragmatism presents a more flexible approach to ethical decision-making, emphasizing the importance of dialogue and shared understanding over a strict adherence to established ethical rules.

Weighing Moral Status

The ethical status of Mr. James's autonomous decision carries more weight than the substituted judgments of others. He had total decisional capacity. Although the daughter has

love and fear for her father, that does not negate his autonomy to make his own choice. The healthcare team has a duty to protect life, but cannot use coercive means against an informed refusal of treatment. The nurse protected the patient's moral agency and assisted the family emotionally, striking a balance through thoughtful reflection, empathy, and ethical consistency, thereby protecting both dignity and professional integrity. Future practice must emphasize early goals-of-care discussions, interdisciplinary collaboration, and continuous ethics education for nurses (Kaldjian, 2010). Thus, this balance supports the ethical foundation of nursing, encompassing both compassionate and principled care.

1. Conclusions

Honoring Mr. James' decision was the best decision from both an ethical and legal perspective. The nurse/advanced practice representative solicited an ethical consult to support Mr. James' transition to Palliative Care, which provides families comfort, emotional support/peace, reconciliation with one another, and fulfills the advanced practice nurse's obligation to uphold patient autonomy. Through the nurse/advanced practice representative's actions, he demonstrated both ethical courage and moral clarity while displaying compassion to both patients and their families with conflicting values. It is yet to be determined how best to prepare families to make these kinds of decisions before they are faced with a crisis; therefore, future practice must place more emphasis on conducting goal of care conversations earlier, developing a more collaborative approach to interdisciplinary collaboration, and provide additional ongoing ethics education to all nurse practitioners. Advanced practice nurses are responsible for facilitating ethical dialogue about how to provide compassionate care to patients and their families through their clinical expertise. By utilizing ethical nursing practices, advanced practice nurses provide the greatest ethical value of the nursing profession and ensure the moral integrity of the health care profession.

References

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