Communication Training for ICU Physicians

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Conflicts of Interest

- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Associated Medical Services, Inc.
- If this stuff doesn’t pan out, I’ll get fired.
How many of you are ACLS-certified?

How many of you are certified to TALK about ACLS?

Deaths following WHLS/WDLS

Death following chronic/terminal illness

Death (any cause)

Health Care Use at the End of Life in Western Canada. CIHI 2007.
Communication Skill

- Poor skill correlated with patient complaints
- Factor in lawsuits

Communication in Advanced Illness

• Most important aspects of care
  • Trust and confidence in MDs
  • Avoid aggressive care that is unlikely to benefit me
  • Honest communication about disease

• Highest priorities for EOL care
  • Emotional assessment/treatment
  • Physician available and taking interest in pt
  • Clear and consistent communication

Heyland et al. CMAJ 2006;174:627-33.
Heylant et al. CMAJ 2010;182: E747-752
When is ACP taking place?

- **SUPPORT**
  - 46% taking place 2d from death

- **Stage IV Lung/Colorectal Cancer**
  - 33d from death

- **Adult congenital heart disease**
  - 2d from death
  - 50% die receiving CPR

Advance Care Planning Evaluation in Elderly Patients

- Prospective audit-feedback study
- 12 sites reporting data from first year
- Patient data
  - Chronic illness, >50% predicted 6m mortality
- Family data
- Hospital data
• Pt told about limited life expectancy - 20%
• FM told about limited life expectancy - 33%
• Have thought about ICU/goals of care
  • Pt - 76%
  • FM - 82%
• Have discussed thoughts with…
  • FM - 92%
  • SDM - 56%
  • GP - 30%
  • Specialist MD 17%
On this admission, did you discuss...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Discussed</th>
<th>Felt it was important and not completely satisfied with conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prognosis</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is important to you</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits/Burdens of LST</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a decision about LST</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
ACCEPT

• Hospital
  • ACP is part of admission- 25%
  • Clinical staff detailed to support ACP- 45%
MD Barriers/Facilitators

- Lack of training
- Lack of time
- Lack of relationship with patient
- “Unrealistic” expectations
- Communication Training
- Use of framework
- Deliberate practice

Communication Training

• Residents’ highest priorities/lowest competence
  • Symptom management
  • Communicating/educating pts/families about EOL

• Uncommon in residency programs

• Teachable and Durable
  • Formal teaching, not experience

Levinson et al. JAMA 2011;305:1802-3.
Critical Care Trainee Workshop

• 90-Minute Didactic Session
  – Communications schemata, techniques
  – Videos to model behaviour

• Simulated family meetings with SFMs
  – Intractable conflict- MD vs. Family
  – Discordant wishes- Family vs. ACP
  – Grief and Inner Conflict
  – Conflict within a family- SDM vs. SDM
Didactic Session

This is a difficult discussion

- Stressful situation for family
  - Acute anxiety (69%), depression (35%)
  - Delayed Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (33%)
    - Azoulay et al. AJRCCM 2005;171:987-94
- Factors increasing stress
  - Greater involvement in decisions

Substitute Decision-Making

- If there is no known Prior Capable Wish, SDMs must decide according to the patient’s “best interests”. This involves considering:
  - Beliefs and values of the patient.
  - Statements that are not Prior Capable Wishes

Overview

- Prepare for the meeting
- First Half
  - Establish rapport/Neutral subjects
  - Open-ended questions, active listening
- Second Half
  - Share information, diagnosis/prognosis
  - Establish goals of care
  - Agree on a plan of treatment
- Summarize and arrange next meeting

Techniques to Resolve Conflict

- Validating
  - Support and acknowledge feelings of others.
    - “You’re upset because you feel that we haven’t done enough to help your mother. That would make me upset, too.”
- Reflecting
  - Checking and interpreting what you’ve heard
    - “You feel as though nothing is happening unless you are there to make sure that it happens...is that accurate?”
Future direction

- Earlier training in residency
- Nationwide program (ACES)
- Tailored training for specialties
Thank you for your attention!

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