

Ethical Dilemma

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Ethical Dilemma Case study #1

Facts

Mr. B. is a 79 year-old man who is refusing treatment. He was admitted 8 days ago and has cellulitis on his right leg and probably neurosyphilis. He lives in an SRO and could be treated there by a visiting nurse if he were willing to accept treatment. Two psychiatry physicians say he lacked capacity and requested consultation regarding transfer to a nursing home.

Ethical framework

Using the nursing process as a guide, the first step is to identify the problem. The dilemma is rather or not Mr B has the mental capacity to exercise his right to autonomy and self-determination to receive or refuse care (Kelley, 1995).

Next, we assess the situation. Mr. B has been accepting care for his wound until the last couple of days. He does not understand the implications of not getting care for his wound or his recently diagnosed syphilis. This leads some health team members to believe he is not capable to make prudent decisions regarding his treatment. Someone should talk with Mr. B to determine his reasons for refusing treatment for his wound, his denial of having syphilis to determine his capacity to make his own health care decisions.

Planning would entail addressing the issues Mr. B has with receiving treatment. If he is deemed to be incompetent, health team members may take a parental role to protect him from decisions that would negatively affect his health (Buchanan, 2008). The Ethics committee should be consulted to ensure we are truly acting in the best interest of Mr. B or denying him his right of autonomy and self-determination. If he is found to be competent, has been given

education regarding his conditions and their treatments, and continues to refuse treatment we must respect his decisions and plan for his discharge and the follow-up care he wants.

Implementation of interventions would depend on Mr. B's decisions or the decisions made for him by healthcare team members.

Evaluation of Mr. B's case would teach us how to utilize resources such as the Ethics Committee, and to reflect on our feelings about Mr. B's right to accept or refuse care.

Conclusion

By using the nursing process, I concluded that until Mr. B is proven to be competent he has every right to refuse treatment. We, as health care workers, always want to help people and do what we consider is "in their best interest." It is a human right to have autonomy, personal freedom, and self-determination ("Right of Autonomy," n.d.). Regardless of what we think the best care for the patient may be, it is really not our decision no matter how uncomfortable it makes us feel.

References

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Date: _06/07/2015_____

**Ethics Case Study Discussion
Initial Posting Rubric**

Criteria	Comment	Points
Logical concise ethical rationale presented for decision in case study (20)		
Decision based upon an identified ethical framework (theory) (30)		
Professional sources used to support position/ Grammar, APA formatting (10)		
Total points Initial Post (60)		
Student used own case study (+5)		

