

resolving ethical dilemma in clinical setting

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ETHICAL CHALLENGES

- Clinicians face ethical dilemmas on a daily basis, regardless of where they work
- Ethical considerations are impacted by so many factors, such as culture, religion, individual values and beliefs. These factors shape our ethical views and impact ethical decisions that affect clinicians and their patients.
- There are many ethical issues clinicians can encounter in the workplace. These include quality versus quantity of life
- Quantity may address how long a person lives or perhaps how many people will be affected by the decision.
- Quality pertains to how well an individual lives life, and this varies upon the definition of quality of life. So how does the clinicians support a patient deciding between a therapy that will prolong life but compromise the quality of life?

IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

- **Medical ethics** is a system of moral principles that apply values and judgments to the practice of medicine,
- **Medical Ethical Dilemma:** is a types of behavior or phenomena by the healthcare providers that have the potential to become a problem.
- **Morality:** are the principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. In other words, it is the disjunction between right and wrong.

WHAT IS AN ETHICAL DILEMMA?

There are three conditions that must be present for a situation to be considered an ethical dilemma.

- The first condition occurs in situations when an individual, called the “agent,” must make a decision about which course of action is best.
- The second condition for ethical dilemma is that there must be different courses of action to choose from.
- Third, in an ethical dilemma, no matter what course of action is taken, some ethical principle is compromised. In other words, there is no perfect solution.

TYPES OF ETHICAL DILEMMAS

- An “absolute” or “pure” ethical dilemma: only occurs when two (or more) ethical standards apply to a situation but are in conflict with each other.
- An “approximate” dilemmas: when there is conflicts between values, laws, and policies.

HOW TO APPROACH AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

- Step one: recognize the situation as one that raises an ethical dilemma.
- Step two: break the dilemma into its component parts.
- Step three: seek additional information, including the patient's viewpoint.
- Step four: identify any relevant law or professional guidance.
- Step five: subject the dilemma to critical analysis.
- Step six: be able to justify the decision with sound arguments.

STEP ONE: RECOGNISE THE SITUATION AS ONE THAT RAISES AN ETHICAL DILEMMA

- Identifying that a problem has an ethical dimension is not always as easy as it sounds.
- Ethical problems emerge where values, principles or moral imperatives come into conflict.

STEP TWO: BREAK THE DILEMMA INTO ITS COMPONENT PARTS

- Having recognized the existence of an ethical problem, a critical next step involves clearing away irrelevant information and identifying the ethically significant aspects of the problem. This involves:
- identifying and describing as accurately as possible the question that we are seeking to answer
- identifying relevant principles.

STEP THREE: SEEK ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, INCLUDING THE PATIENT'S VIEWPOINT

- Before going on to analyze the dilemma, a vital next step is to identify the relevant facts.
- In relation to a young person, for example, it will ordinarily be necessary to identify whether he or she is sufficiently mature to make a decision.
- If not, it will be necessary to identify someone with parental responsibility to make the decision.

STEP FOUR: IDENTIFY ANY RELEVANT LAW OR PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE

- UU Kesehatan
- UUPK
- UU RS
- Kodeki

STEP FIVE: SUBJECT THE DILEMMA TO CRITICAL ANALYSIS

- Complex dilemmas may require more careful balancing of relevant factors, including any principles highlighted by guidance, patient views and the opinions of colleagues.
- If in doubt, always ask for help.
- It can be extremely helpful to refer problems to the Medical Ethics Committee for consideration.

STEP SIX: BE ABLE TO JUSTIFY THE DECISION WITH SOUND ARGUMENTS

- You are not expected to be omniscient but to act reasonably and to be able to justify both clinically and ethically the decisions you make.
- You will not be expected to try and resolve ethical dilemmas single-handed. Nevertheless, it is good practice to get into the habit, where confronted with ethical dilemmas, of recording any discussions with the patient or colleagues in medical notes as well as indicating any guidance notes consulted.
- Where advice has been sought from professional or medico-legal bodies, this should also be recorded in the notes. In this way the reasoning behind decisions can be given.

Case

1.KANKER PANKREAS STADIUM LANJUT

- Seorang pria usia 40 tahun dirawat di rumah sakit karena menderita kanker pankreas stadium lanjut. Kondisi ikterus yang dialami telah mengalami perbaikan namun pasien mengeluhkan nyeri abdomen yang sangat hebat. Pasien telah bercerai beberapa bulan sebelumnya dan anggota keluarga yang dimilikinya saat ini adalah kedua orangtuanya. Karena kondisi yang dialaminya saat ini pasien telah berkali-kali meminta tim dokter untuk mengakhiri hidupnya.

BAYI TIDAK DIRUJUK UNTUK MENDAPATKAN PENGOBATAN YANG TEPAT

- Satu kasus neonatal dari sebuah Rumah Sakit Umum Daerah di sebuah kota kabupaten K di propinsi Jawa Tengah. Dokter spesialis Obstetri dan Ginekologi (dr. M, Sp.OG) tidak mempunyai hubungan antar sejawat yang baik dengan dokter spesialis Anak (dr. P, Sp.A). NN adalah bayi yang mengalami luka hematoma di kepala, hal ini terjadi karena proses kelahirannya ditolong dengan cara forcep oleh dr. M, Sp.OG. Yang mana luka tersebut merupakan faktor presipitasi penyakit “NEONATAL JAUNDICE”. Setelah dilakukan pemeriksaan hematologi golongan darah bayi bergolongan darah O, oleh dr. M, Sp.OG dilakukan pengobatan transfusi darah tanpa konsultasi dahulu dengan dr. P, Sp.A yang seharusnya menangani penyakit bayi tersebut. Pada hari ke lima, ibu bayi melihat warna kulit bayinya berwarna kuning semakin jelas. Karena kondisi ibu setelah melahirkan belum sehat, maka ibu bayi menyuruh suaminya untuk berkonsultasi dengan dokter spesialis anak yang berpraktek perorangan di kota kabupaten. Menurut dokter spesialis anak pengobatan yang benar untuk neonatal jaundice karena luka hematoma akibat forcep adalah dimonitor saja tidak perlu ditransfusi. Setelah ditransfusi kondisi bayi semakin memburuk, bayi tersebut menderita Kernicterus. Akhirnya bayi meninggal dunia dan keluarga bayi menuntut dokter spesialis obstetri dan ginekologi karena telah melakukan pengobatan yang salah.