A Discussion of Ethical / End of Life Considerations Related to Dysphagia

Illinois Speech-Language-Hearing Association
February 7, 2020
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American Speech-Language-Hearing Association

Code of Ethics

Principle of Ethics I

Individuals shall honor their responsibility to hold paramount the welfare of persons they serve professionally or who are participants in research and scholarly activities, and they shall treat animals involved in research in a humane manner.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Rule</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rule H</td>
<td>Individuals shall obtain informed consent from the persons they serve about the nature and possible risks and effects of services provided, technology employed, and products dispensed. This obligation also includes informing persons served about possible effects of not engaging in treatment or not following clinical recommendations. If diminished decision-making ability of persons served is suspected, individuals should seek appropriate authorization for services, such as authorization from a spouse, other family member, or legally authorized/appointed representative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rule K</td>
<td>Individuals who hold the Certificate of Clinical Competence shall evaluate the effectiveness of services provided, technology employed, and products dispensed, and they shall provide services or dispense products only when benefit can reasonably be expected.</td>
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Decision-making for End of Life Care

Dysphagia Decisions at the End of Life

- Normal diet
- Thickened liquids or other significant diet restrictions
- NPO / Artificial Nutrition and Hydration (ANH)

Medical Ethics concepts

- Autonomy
- Beneficence
- Nonmaleficence
- Justice
Evidence Based Practice
1. Best evidence
2. “Informed” clinical expertise
3. Patient preference

Resources for the SLP
• ASHA Code of Ethics, Scope of Practice, position papers, etc.
• Medical Ethics
• Law
• Evidence Based Practice
• Re. specific patient
  – Team
  – Ethics dept.
  – Courts

Justice Cardozo:
"Every human being of adult years and sound mind has a right to determine what shall be done with his body…”


Hospice Care & Palliative Care

Shift of focus from curing disease to optimizing quality of life care, minimizing symptoms.

Family Concerns may include:
  Weakness
  Dehydration
  Pain

Benefit versus Harm of Artificial Hydration and Nutrition for patients at End of Life
  • Does ANH prolong life?
  • Does ANH prevent aspiration?
  • Does ANH improve quality of life?

Comfort Feeding

Shared Decision making

Appropriate Uses for ANH in Palliative Care
References related to Ethical / End of Life Considerations Related to Dysphagia


ASHA
https://www.asha.org/slp/clinical/endoflife/
https://www.asha.org/SLP/End-of-Life-Resources/