

A narrative approach to teaching ethics concerning end-of-life care in Intensive Care Unit (ICU)

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Abstract

Aim: the goal of this presentation is to share the outcome and experience of developing a workshop on narrative ethics. End-of-life issues were chosen as a focus for health care workers (HCWs) to practice narrative ethics in the workshop.

Method: An actual ICU story presenting at Taiwan medical center resulting in death was presented in the whole day workshop. The family's narrative is an expression of great loss, grief, reluctance, regret and displeasure toward the hospital which was written and divided into several scenarios to promote HCWs' reflection during group discussions. Presentations of each group were video recorded, transcribed in full and subsequently analyzed.

Results: We observed that the participants experienced a sequence of responses during the small group discussion. That is, an initial empathetic understanding of family's situation, then self-reflection over previous actions in medical care, and finally the motivation to "doing good" in end of life patient care and family interaction. Eight types of consensus in "doing good" for end-of-life care have evolved as the outcome of the workshop.

Conclusion:

A narrative ethics proofs to be positively beneficial to a deeper understanding of the ethical issues in the caring for end-of-life patients in ICU. This creates an opportunity for a reflection upon HCWs' professional roles in their day to day works and can re-affirm HCWs to apply ethics in line with living realities. Furthermore, it alerts HCWs to how their institutional and professional practices are experienced by patient and their family.