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Review Article

A Few Words about Responsibilities in Health Care and Medicine

Siniša Franjić*

Independent Researcher, Croatia

***Corresponding Author:** Siniša Franjić, Independent Researcher, Croatia.

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Abstract

Clinical ability to make health care decisions means the ability to understand the significant benefits and risks of the proposed intervention, to understand alternative solutions, and to make and communicate their decisions. Healthcare professionals estimate this form of ability clinically and document the judgment process. Clinical capacity is determined only for specific health care decisions and is limited to them. The level of clinical ability to make such decisions depends on their complexity. It can be changeable, intermittent and dependent on circumstances. Poisoned, comatose, severely depressed, agitated, or otherwise disabled patients do not currently have the ability to make such decisions, but may regain it later. Patients with reduced abilities, even those with significant cognitive deficits, can still retain sufficient ability to make health decisions, which in turn depends on their complexity. For patients without clinical ability, the physician should obtain consent from a relative or representative with a permanent power of attorney or from another, legally authorized deputy, except in an emergency. Then, if there is no substitute, the doctrine of presumed consent takes effect: patients are considered to consent to any necessary treatment. Ignoring the decisions of able-bodied patients as well as accepting the decisions of incapacitated patients is ethically unacceptable and subject to legal liability.

Keywords: *Health; Health Care; Informed Consent; Responsibility*

Introduction

As health care costs still rise, public health policy in advanced industrialised countries increasingly emphasises the importance of citizens' personal responsibility for his or her own health [1]. Strategies to encourage members of the general public to minimize their reliance on traditional types of health care are often entangled with the introduction of recent technologies that are intended to facilitate better access to health information and enable opportunities for self-care. New service delivery models supported primary health care provided within the community by multidisciplinary health care teams and supported by home-based health care programmes have emerged hand-in-hand with discourses of 'patient centred care', 'shared decision making', 'consumer health information' and patient 'autonomy and empowerment'.

'Empowerment' and 'consumerism' are two of the central concepts embedded within the narrative of private responsibility. Providing health information, especially via the net, through e-health initiatives like government-financed health web portals, is anticipated to 'empower' members of the lay public (often described as consumers) not only to participate more actively in their own care, but also to require more responsibility for his or her health-related decisions (even those as significant as selecting treatment options). Information delivered via health promotion programmes is also expected to lead to behaviour changes, specifically, the adoption of 'healthier lifestyles', including improved dietary habits and avoidance of risky activities, like smoking and excessive sun tanning, that are intended to improve public health and reduce health care costs. Other samples of strategies intended to empower health system consumers include training patients to ask their doctors more questions, teaching patients to 'self-manage' chronic illnesses, providing members of the family with

results of genetic testing for heritable health conditions and inspiring the house use of self-monitoring equipment starting from relatively 'simple' devices like blood glucose monitors to machines as complex as ambulatory ECG recorders to diagnose irregular cardiac rhythm.

Informed consent

More than the other medicolegal doctrine, consent reflects the fundamental ethical responsibility to respect the non-public autonomy of the patient [2]. Autonomy stems from the Greek for "self-law or rule" and has been defined because the moral right to decide on and follow one's own plan of life and action or the moral ability to spot and to pursue goals that we've set for ourselves. Within the health care provider/patient relationship, the provider's duty of fidelity, or faithfulness, compels respect for the patient's autonomy.

The legal counterpart to the concept of autonomy is that the inherent right of self-determination, the recognition that every individual has the basic prerogative to manage his or her own body and deserves to be shielded from unwanted intrusions or unconsented-to touching. As a patient ages, this right of self-determination should become, if anything, stronger rather than weaker.

A second ethical basis for the consent doctrine is that the encouragement of more intelligent and rational decision making. Medical decisions are based on more than biological data and laboratory values. They also involve important considerations of the patient's own life plan. Only the patient has access to those subjective factors, which, for older individuals with a wealth of life experiences and opportunities for value distillation behind them, is especially weighty.

Informed consent may also help to instill a greater sense of partnership and active mutual participation within the patient/health care professional relationship. It encourages more openness and less authoritarianism on a part of the professional. Other values served by the doctrine include a minimization of duress and a maximization of the patient's quality of life, a rise within the public visibility of treatment decisions, and also the encouragement of professional self-scrutiny with relation to medical decisions.

Candour

All healthcare professionals have a obligation of candour, which may be a professional responsibility to be open and honest with patients when things get it wrong [3]. This suggests that a healthcare professional must tell the patient when something has gone wrong, apologize to the patient, and offer an appropriate remedy. The healthcare professional must also support and encourage colleagues to be open and honest and to report concerns where appropriate. The professional duty of candour is explained in more detail within the GMC's (General Medical Council) guidance, entitled 'Openness and honesty when things go wrong: the professional duty of candour'.

The importance of professionalism within the current health care environment can't be stressed enough, and explicit instruction geared towards the development of proper professional habits must come early and must be reinforced often [4]. Quality of care is becoming a greater priority, medical technology is becoming more and more sophisticated, and society is becoming more culturally and religiously diverse, resulting in tensions between values among stakeholders. As such, professionalism has become a greater a part of one's educational and employment responsibilities than ever before.

Responsibility

Responsibility lies behind information, action, emotion, and thought for NTDs (Neglected tropical diseases) [5]. But where does it lie and with whom? For issues where neglect has become a synonymous characterisation, responsibility may appear clearer. as an example, medical neglect takes place on a private basis with a doctor's or hospital's failure of a duty of care to a patient. Sometimes responsibility can even fall on individuals for not caring for his or her health adequately (e.g. illness associated with obesity or smoking) or wider institutional, governmental, and societal reasons that make medical neglect systematic. Responsibility can shift, like drug and alcohol abuse; blame will be an ethical judgment of behaviour or blamed on being an illness.

The agency assigned to the neglected party becomes central. Child and elder neglect are more obvious examples, because the neglected are viewed as weaker and more vulnerable, with a duty of care from the parents, guardians, or carers. However, child abuse and neglect had to be accepted as an idea before legal protection and recompense was possible.

NTDs are a complicated proposition on which to assign blame due to the various societal actors involved. More generally, societal neglect could be a failure to care when one should, and it's going to include all societal actors, with varying responsibilities. Responsibility for health can be thought of as being grouped into the following major areas: personal, governmental, social, and environmental. The social and environmental perspective has gained ground through the increase of epidemiology, watching health of populations and also the governmentality of the populace with responsibility for health placed with the state. Balance between personal and societal responsibility moves back and forth, moreover as how epidemiology is interested in individual risk factors of disease and government taxes 'unhealthy' individuals (e.g. through sugar, alcohol and cigarettes).

If responsibility is spread amongst various actors, like NTDs, this returns to the question of how it's divided, whether equally or to varying degrees. Big pharma is thought to supply the drugs and innovation or R&D (Research and development). Whether or not they need incentives to try and do so is debated, as has who pays – the donation of medication wasn't straightforwardly arrived at. Similarly, governments of donor countries and international organisations like the UN (United Nations) have provided most of the funding for NTDs. Funding has more lately switched to philanthropic foundations, including the Gates Foundation and endemic countries themselves, especially middle-income countries like Brazil and China.

The expectations of varied actors will change, as big pharma is expected to have a bigger corporate social responsibility role, and governments are expected to provide more than access and encompass: "… sanitation, pollution control, food and drug safety, health education, disease surveillance, urban planning and occupational health".

Ongoing education, like conferences, seminars, workshops and inservices, are required to stay current with new knowledge, technologies, and skills or to establish ongoing clinical competencies [6]. Because the sphere of health care is becoming increasingly more complex and technical, nobody individual can know everything about how best to provide safe and effective care, and nobody degree can provide the necessary knowledge needed to span a complete career. It is, therefore, a necessary expectation that nurses and other health professionals participate in lifelong learning and continued competency. Lifelong learning isn't only individual learning, but also interprofessional, collaborative, and team-oriented learning. as an example, using simulation and web training to teach nursing and medical students together on roles and responsibilities, effective communication, conflict resolution, and shared decision-making is expected to result in collaborative graduates able to work effectively in patient-centered teams. Further, the utilization of interprofessional education is assumed to foster collaboration in implementing policies, improving services, and preparing teams to resolve problems that exceed the capacity of anybody professional.

Treatment

In the activity of treatment and prevention, every complaint of the patient and pathological sign of disease which the physician encounters must be explored [7]. Among the choices extended to the patient is that the making the most of the acceptable therapeutics in step with the medical state of the art, the individuality of the patient and extent of the disease. The physician and dentist (henceforth physician) must use the foremost precise diagnostic procedures, therapeutic methods and equipment available.

The physician must do everything which is within the interest of prevention, life saving, healing and restoring of the flexibility to work for the patient, with the best care and circumspection. The physician must also treat the patient considered incurable with the utmost care.

The responsibilities of medical treatment also involve the methods of acceptance and care of the patient as well. The patient may come to the physician during a specified time. The physician or the local authorities stipulate the office hours, and through this point the physician is required to treat the patient who involves him in step with the most effective of his ability with the suitable treatment. The physician carries out his treatment of hospitalized patients in order and here the identical principles apply as above. In emergency cases the physician is required to treat immediately, or if called to the patient for an emergency, must come immediately. In these cases the physician must interrupt his planned schedule, since an emergency situation takes priority. An emergency case arises when the lack of medical treatment would end in loss of the patient's life, serious danger to physical health, or if over the patient's lifetime would cause such physical damage which might endanger the patient's life or lead to permanent injury. An unconscious patient or an accident also constitute an emergency. The law also stipulates that therein case emergency treatment is additionally appropriate whether or not the statement from that person calling the physician isn't clear. If a physician can not be found to care for the patient in an emergency case, a certified dentist can be required to render care, naturally within the limits of his alternatives and abilities. In an emergency the physician cannot refuse to treat a patient who involves him whether or not the patient doesn't belong to his district.

Parents

Where a child lacks competence to make decisions, those with parental responsibility may make them on their behalf [8]. Parental responsibility could be a legal concept that consists of the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that almost all parents have in respect of their children. It includes the right to give consent to medical treatment, provided the treatment is within the interests of the child. Parental responsibility is afforded not only to parents, however, and not all parents have parental responsibility, despite arguably having equal moral rights to form decisions for his or her children where they need been equally involved in their care. It's possible that parents who don't have parental responsibility could use the Human Rights Act 1998 to say a right to be involved in any important decisions about their child's life, including decisions about medical treatment.

Both of a child's parents have parental responsibility if they were married at the time of the child's conception or at a while thereafter. Neither parent loses parental responsibility if they divorce, and responsibility endures if the child is in care or custody. It is lost, however, if the child is adopted. If the parents haven't married, the mother automatically has parental responsibility at birth and retains this, with the exception of adoption, unless it's exceptionally been removed by a court. Unmarried fathers registered on the child's birth certificate also have parental responsibility for children whose births were registered from 15 April 2002 in Northern Ireland, 1 December 2003 in England and Wales and 4 May 2006 in Scotland. For births registered before these dates unmarried fathers don't automatically have parental responsibility. A father may acquire it in various ways, including by stepping into a parental responsibility agreement with the mother, or through a parental responsibility order made by a court. Where there's any reasonable doubt, enquiries should be made to make sure the father has parental responsibility before relying solely on his consent. Some same-sex couples will both hold parental responsibility for a child. Where there's reasonable doubt about who is eligible to provide consent on behalf of a child, further enquiries should be made.

Child's best interests

It must be the intention of the clinician to act within the child's best interests and also the child's welfare must be paramount [9]. In the majority circumstances it should be expected that the people that represent their child's best interests are their parents or legal guardians. The standard should therefore be collaborative: between the professionals, the child, and their parents. In some circumstances, where parents aren't available, don't have parental responsibility, or lack capacity, it should be reasonable to ask the child to give his or her permission to the team to give treatment or undertake investigations. the standard at which the clinician visiting be are judged is that of reasonableness; there are therefore going to be nuances which will take considerable experience to negotiate. If clinicians are aware that they'll not have this experience they ought to ask themselves whether it's reasonable that they must be seeking consent under these circumstances. When obtaining consent from children there are many additional considerations that has to be made, which include:

- The age and ability of the child.
- The nature of the treatment or investigation.
- Any other barriers to a free informed choice.
- The urgency of the need for consent.

Commonly a clinician has only one parent who is with the child with whom to debate consent. In most circumstances it's reasonable and thus lawful that informed consent is given by that parent and, where appropriate, on discussion with the child. The clinician is explicitly expected to act in good faith and for the benefit of the child. There could also be circumstances, however, where a wise person might feel a conflict of opinion between parents who are either in an antagonistic relationship or where societal views is also polarized: one example might perhaps be male circumcision, where the consent of both parents with parental responsibility should be sought. Knowledge of the social situation of the child is therefore often essential. A little number of cases may arise where relatively unproven treatments or those with serious side effects are proposed where a reasonable clinician would be expected, if time allows, to debate the choices and find the informed consent of both parents. If there's disagreement between the parents in these circumstances it'd be sensible to get formal legal advice.

Expert witness

When giving evidence as an expert, the rules governing procedure in court elucidate that the duty of an expert is to help the court and this overrides any party providing instructions or paying the expert's fees [3]. It's important that an witness is truthful on the facts, honest in their opening and comprehensive in their coverage to the relevant matters. this implies that an expert witness is under an obligation to give a true opinion, whether or not this could sometimes run counter to the interests of his client. An expert witness should also be mindful of any potential conflicts of interests and has a responsibility to draw this to the attention of the court and also the parties if necessary. The corollary of all of this can be that the court can rely on expert evidence as independent, objective, and unbiased.

Liability

The practice of medicine may be a worthy, honest, and decent profession, which needs a special commitment to service [10]. It requires a doctor's personal responsibility to his (her) patient and collectively toward the group within which he (she) operates, demanding, from the doctor, a good spirit of sacrifice and special behavior beyond that of other professionals in society. Doctors are required to supply a special performance, great knowledge of the individual and health but don't seem to be exempt to punishment for a mistake.

Medical professionals must be taught that their performance, far from being covered by a sacred mantle of protection, is linked at all times, with the legal sanction of the state and individuals which will be subrogated to it, to punish mistakes, due to their "guilt negligence," leading to damage to an individual because of the doctor-patient relationship. There exists the potential for criminal responsibility of the physician for homicide and negligent injury, as if this were the only legal implications which will arise from their professional practice.

The doctor's performance should be analyzed within the context of the events that occurred, and these should be compared with those of a person whose behavior is careful and predictable. a personal analysis, without prejudice or learned behaviors, or preestablished judgment should offer the basis for any consideration.

This represents the development of the concepts of medical responsibility and liability for civil order, either in contract or tort, as appropriate; ethical and, where appropriate, disciplinary when the doctor fails in his moral conduct; and criminal, not just for those

crimes associated with culpable homicide (negligent homicide manslaughter) or associated with the injuries inflicted. There exist a series of actions mandated in some special situations as may exist with communicable diseases: AIDS, blood transfusions, medical fees, or organ transplants. Within the concept of medical liability, the rule of Law prevails, threatening: whoever produced a damage then he (she) is obliged to repair it. This objectification concept of damage and therefore the obligation to repair, regardless of conduct, subjective from whom a presumption of causing damage exists, has been an awfully important factor in the initiation of medical claims. Against the proper of the claimant, it's been possible to establish the position of the claimed doctor, as long because the damage claimed is because of guilt (negligence) and therefore the damage cannot be avoided. The normative principle expands itself, to the knowledge of the overall population, as a source of obligations capable to generate an economical compensation for an injured claimant. Legislators have included a special allowance, possibly granted by the judge, to the families for the pain suffered within the event of death of the victim's pain and suffering (pretium doloris).

Conclusion

The person remains legally capable until the court declares him or her legally incapable of one or all areas of activity. The legal criteria for declaring legal incapacity vary from state to state. However, these conditions are typically required: disability, inability to receive and judge information or make and communicate decisions, and inability to meet basic physical health, safety and self-care settings without protective interventions. When a person is declared legally incompetent, the court appoints a guardian or custodian who makes legally binding decisions for that person within the scope of judicial powers. The court may also make or approve specific decisions that are the subject of a hearing. In that case, the doctor may request a court decision on legal capacity, i.e. he may be called to testify or testify at the hearing to determine legal capacity.

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