

# Critical Care Overview Content

Lewis-65

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On-line Content (1.5 hr)

Unit Objectives:

- Discuss ethical and legal issues in the delivery of critical care. (2,7)\*
- Describe examples of advocacy witnessed in the clinical areas. (1,2,3,5)\*

\* End-of-Program Student Learning Outcomes

## Assignment:

Read Lewis Chapter 65 pg. 1533-1537 and the Unit 1: Critical Care Nursing PowerPoint.

Read the case study, then answer the case study questions below.

## CASE STUDY

- ▶ Margaret Mayfield is a 62 year old female who has been admitted from the ED to the critical care unit, after calling 911 due to severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. Her past medical history includes: dwarfism, HTN, hyperlipidemia, diabetes mellitus, and chronic Foley catheter due to urinary retention. She lives alone in an apartment and has no family members. Her friend is her POA for healthcare, and is the only contact listed. She has a home health aide visit once a week to assist her with bathing and all of her meals are delivered from local take-out restaurants. She utilizes a walker at home, however reports she hasn't been out of bed for the last several days due to weakness and fever. She uses a private ambulance service to go to physician appointments; this is the only time she gets out of her apartment for the last three years. Home medications include carvedilol, simvastatin, aspirin, and insulin. She does not have her medications with her and does not know the doses.

## Case Study Questions

- ▶ As the critical care nurse caring for her, what overall concerns do you have?
  - I would be concerned about an infection d/t her severe fatigue, weakness, and fever. I also thought of this first because of her history of a chronic foley catheter. I would also be worried about the fact that she lives alone and does not have any family around. Since she has not been out of bed for several days, she is a high fall risk and at risk for poor nutrition because she probably has not been eating. It would also be a priority to check her blood sugar. She may be very weak and listless if her blood sugar is very low. Also, if she is constantly getting take-out food as her main source of food it is probably not the most nutritious and beneficial to her health. This would contribute to her hyperlipidemia. I would also be concerned about her medication doses and see if her friend/POA would be able to bring them to the hospital.
- ▶ Describe ways in which you would communicate with her and her POA for healthcare. Include what topics you would discuss at this time in her hospitalization.
  - I would communicate in a very open manner and include the patient and POA in discussion and decisions. I would also encourage the patient and her POA to ask questions, share concerns, & state their needs. I would focus on putting the patient first and actively listening to any concerns. I would discuss her medications and see if it would be possible to get them from her house to be able to see the doses. I would also discuss how much worse it could have been if she had not called 911. I would focus in more on her symptoms and explain to the patient and POA how the ICU works and noises they may hear. I would do my best to decrease the patient's anxiety and make sure to explain things well before every procedure. At this point in time, I would also talk the them about how the doctor wants to proceed and any test that may need to be run. Another concern I would focus upon is her skin integrity and how d/t her poor nutrition and weak state it is easy for a sore to occur. I would explain the importance of turning and repositioning.

- ▶ Discuss the ethical issues this case presents.
  - Any ethical issue that stood out to me right away was the dangers/concerns of Margaret living alone with very little contact from others. If she had fallen somewhere and passed out, she may not have been found until the home health aide came a week later. However, Margaret still has autonomy and the freedom to choose where and how to live. It is her life and she has the right to make her own choices. Maybe she wants to still be independent and live alone in her own space. As a nurse it is our job to respect that autonomy and just educate to the best of our ability.
- ▶ Discuss the legal issues this case presents.
  - A legal issue this case presents is that she does not have her medications with her nor does she know the doses. It is important to find that information out so Margaret can receive what her body is used to her taking. I would also have concerns if Margaret is able to make decisions for herself or to involve her POA if she is not able.
- ▶ In what ways will you serve as an advocate for Margaret?
  - As a nurse I would advocate for Margaret to help her receive the best care as possible. I would advocate for her by providing vigilant nursing care and do my best to help resolve arising complications and problems. I would help her and reduce anxiety by making her as comfortable as possible in the ICU and explain unfamiliar items in her environment as well as procedures. I would also advocate for proper pain control and make sure her pain is managed in the right way. Another common problem in the ICU is difficulty with sleep. I would advocate for proper rest for Margaret and make sure to schedule rest periods, cluster care, limit noise as much as possible, and to help keep her on the correct day/night schedule. Since she has not gotten out of bed in several days, she is probably very weak and exhausted, rest is very important for her wellbeing.
- ▶ What other departments would you involve in her care, and why?
  - I would make sure pharmacy is involved in order to get her medications figured out and taken care of. I would also get dietary involved with her history of hyperlipidemia in order to help her have a well-balanced nutritious diet. I would also have physical therapy involved once she is better because she uses a walker at home. She will most likely need help building her strength back up.

Place your answers to these questions in the “Unit 1: Overview CC dropbox” by 1/11/2023 at 0800. Be prepared to share and discuss your thoughts in class.

*In order to receive full credit (1 hour class time) for this assignment, it must be completed in its entirety by the due date/time assigned. Any assignments not completed in its entirety will result in missed class time.*