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Z-Chapter 19 Ethical Issue Reflection

After researching about ethical dilemmas in the nursing world today, I noticed that end of life decision making can cause a lot of problems with family members. The goal for a nurse during end-of-life is to care for their dying patients with respect and comfort measures. Nurses want to respect the patient's wishes as much as they can. Since the family can be concerned and involved with the patients care, sometimes it can be confusing and cause dilemmas in nursing care. Nurses can sometimes feel overwhelmed with what to do regarding patient wishes versus family wishes. According to the ANA code of ethics for nurses, the third code states that "the nurse promotes, advocates for, and protects the rights, health, and safety of the patient". I believe this speaks volume to the ethical dilemma I am talking about. We, as nurses, must keep the patient as our number one priority and advocate for and protect what our patients want and their rights.

An example of this would be a patient has lung cancer and was given treatment options that may prolong her life by four months. Her family is wanting her to continue on this treatment journey in the hopes that she will live past those months and be with them for a little longer. The patient, however, wants to choose comfort measures only and signs a DNR form. As the nurse, I feel that it would be my responsibility to clearly allow this patient to make the decisions for herself. She fully understands the diagnosis and prognosis and is able to understand the side effects and treatment options. The ethical dilemma can come into play when the end-of-life comes along. The decisions regarding resuscitation, mechanical ventilation, and sedation can be hard for families to agree on.

I do feel that I have my own values, beliefs, and morals, but that can't interfere with the patients values, beliefs, and morals. In the AMA Journal of Ethics, it talks for Americans and how there is a growing awareness of the incongruence between the way Americans say they want to die and how they actually do (Stol, 2018). In order for patients to receive that highest quality of care in end of life, it is important that all family members are educated, and all physicians and nurses are recognizing the factors that influence the dying experience. I feel that nurses are very critical people in this time because they can try to bring families into the loop with education. They are invaluable recourses of help for patients and their families. Nurses must advocate for the autonomy and rights of patients. Since the patient signed the DNR, maybe their family will follow her wishes and it could be easier. The dilemma happens when patients do not prepare their Advance Directives, or they do not agree with what the patient is choosing. Once the patient becomes intubated or unable to make decisions for themselves, it can become an ethical dilemma about what is supposed to be for this patients end of life experience. Since I have researched and studied this topic quite a bit, I have learned that it is my job, as a nurse, to provide the bet education to family and advocate for the autonomy and rights of my patients.

## Source

Stol, I. (2018, August 1). *Ethical Dimensions of Caring Well for Dying Patients*. Journal of Ethics | American Medical Association. <https://journalofethics.ama-assn.org/article/ethical-dimensions-caring-well-dying-patients/2018-08>