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Ethical Issues in Nursing

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Ethical Issues in Nursing Informed consent

1-General information :

a- Informed consent is the permission obtained a patient to have a test or procedure performed after the patient has been fully informed about the test or procedure ;the consent may not be in writing ,but a written consent provides better legal protection for health care workers .

b- Informed consent is based on the patients right of self-determination.

c- Information given to the patient must include an explanation of the test or procedure ,its potential risks and benefits ,any reasonable alternatives.

d- The patient must demonstrate that he understands the information ;for instance , a nod of the head would be sufficient for a simple procedure ,such as taking a patients temperature ,whereas a patient about to undergo surgery or a complicated diagnostic procedure should explain his understanding and sign a written consent form .

e- The patient must give the consent voluntary , without coercion or persuasion.

f- The consent must be obtained by a physician before performing an invasive procedure with considerable risks; a patient consents to routine aspects of care by signing a form on admission to the hospital.

g- The consent must be obtained before any preoperative medication or sedatives are administered to ensure the patient's judgment is not impaired. h- The patient must be mentally competent (having the mental and psychological capacity to make decision)

2- Ethical resolution ;

1- The key purpose of informed consent is to ensure the patient's right to self-determination in health care.

2- The reasonable patient standard provides a guideline for disclosing information. 3- The nurse should strive to gain the patient's confidence and trust when providing information, thereby contributing to maximum recovery

Substance abuse among nurses

1- General information

a- A nurse who ingests, injects, or inhales a mind-altering substance cannot practice nursing safely and competently.

b- A practicing nurse will probably encounter a chemically impaired co-worker sometime during her career.

c- Nurses have easy access to drugs because they usually are responsible for obtaining and maintaining the supply of controlled drugs on a hospital unit.

d- Factors contributing to increased substance abuse among nurses include job stress, rotating shifts, staff shortages, unrealistic expectations of the employer, frustration, anxiety, depression, and lack of autonomy in practice.

2- Ethical concerns

professional and emotional conflicts felt by the chemically impaired nurses' colleagues, who must use their training as promoters of health to try to understand the nurses' abuse of health

.

3- Ethical resolutions

a- A chemically impaired nurse is incompetent to practice nursing

and must be removed from the patient care setting.

b- The nurse must be certain that a substance abuse problem exists by carefully collecting and documenting incidents , including specific dates and times before reporting a chemically impaired nurse

c- Confronting or accusing the suspected nurse directly is unwise . d- The nurse files a report through the institutions usual chain of command , starting with the unit manager , then the supervisor, and finally the director of nursing.

e- If the institution's administration takes no action ,the nurse should submit the report to the state board of nursing.

f- The report should be well-documented and signed ,and it should include a request for confidentiality, if appropriate.

Profile Of A Chemically Impaired Nurse

Substance abuse among nurses is not an uncommon problem .

Chances are . each nurse will encounter a chemically impaired coworker at some time, and each nurse has a responsibility to report such a colleague. The following characteristics and situations typify the behavior of a nurse who is abusing a substance.

1- Increased absenteeism.

2- Avoidance of new and challenging assignments. 3- Sudden mood swings and personality changes.

3- 4- Incoherent or incomplete charting.

4- Increased errors in treatment. partiality in dosage computation.

5- Poor personal hygiene and appearance .

7- Inability to concentrate or remember details.