



Ethical decision-making & palliative care

Communication in ethically complex decisions

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Statement of the standard

Parents and healthcare professionals share all relevant information such as the conditions, prognosis, and choices for care of the infant, as well as the social situation, values, and preferences of parents.

Benefits

- Increased trust of parents that decisions are individualised, based on clinical factors and respect for their family values
- Improved understanding of healthcare planning in the short term, but also in the longer term when parents may reflect on the decisions that were made
- Reassurance that the best decisions have been made by healthcare professionals in close dialogue with families
- Improved ability to cope with stress that comes with caring for ill infants



For parents and family

- Parents are informed by healthcare professionals how ethical decisions are made in the neonatal unit.
- Parents are informed about the clinical situation.
- Conditions and preferences of the family are actively explored.
- Parents are offered assistance from an interpreter if necessary.
- Parents are given the right to bring family support or a spiritual adviser to meetings.
- For important decisions sufficient time to allow for appropriate reflection is given; multiple encounters may be required.



For healthcare professionals

- Training on communication of complex clinical issues is attended by all responsible healthcare professionals.
- Sufficient time for meetings with parents is provided.



For neonatal unit

- A private area for meetings between healthcare professionals and family is provided.
- Regular case reviews and training that includes discussing challenges in communication is conducted.



For hospital

- Training on communication of complex clinical issues is ensured.
- When designing neonatal units, private rooms for parent meetings are included.
- Healthcare professionals are adequately supported and appropriate facilities are ensured.



For health service

- In national curricula for healthcare professionals, communication of complex clinical issues is included.

