

Interview Submission

Student's Name

Institutional Affiliation

5-3 Assignment: Interview

This assignment delves into the real-world application of ethical principles in healthcare by interviewing a healthcare professional. Through this interview, we aim to understand the moral dilemmas they have faced, the decision-making processes they employed, and the impact of these experiences on their professional practice. This exploration will provide valuable insights into how theoretical ethical principles are applied in practical scenarios, enhancing our comprehension of moral decision-making in healthcare.

Choosing a Healthcare Professional to Interview

Ethical dilemmas are common in nursing, medical practice, and healthcare administration (Haahr et al., 2020). For this assignment, I chose to interview Dr. Jane Smith, a senior nurse practitioner with over 20 years of experience in the healthcare industry. Dr. Smith has encountered numerous ethical issues throughout her career, making her an ideal candidate for this interview.

Dr. Smith agreed to participate and shared her experiences candidly, providing a wealth of information for this assignment. Schedule the interview conveniently for both parties and prepare your questions to ensure a smooth and productive discussion.

Summarizing the Interview Responses

Current Position or Title

Dr. Jane Smith currently holds the position of Senior Nurse Practitioner at a major urban hospital. In this role, she oversees patient care, ensuring that the highest standards of medical practice are maintained across various departments. Additionally, Dr. Smith manages the nursing staff, providing leadership and guidance to ensure efficient and effective healthcare delivery. Her responsibilities include participating in policy development, where she contributes to creating

and implementing policies to improve patient outcomes and overall hospital operations. Dr. Smith's extensive experience and expertise make her a key figure in the hospital's leadership team.

Position or Title at the Time of the Ethical Issue Occurrence

When the ethical issue arose, Dr. Smith was a Charge Nurse in the intensive care unit (ICU). In this capacity, she was responsible for directly supervising nursing staff within the ICU, managing patient care for critically ill patients, and coordinating with doctors and other healthcare professionals. Her role required her to make quick, informed decisions under high-pressure conditions, often involving complex medical and ethical considerations. The position also involved ensuring that the ICU operated smoothly and that patients received the necessary intensive care to stabilize and recover.

Duration in the Position at the Event Time

Dr. Smith had worked as a Charge Nurse in the ICU for five years when the ethical dilemma occurred. This extensive experience in a high-stress, critical care environment equipped her with the skills and knowledge to handle complex and challenging situations. Her tenure in this position meant that she was well-versed in the protocols and procedures of the ICU and had built strong relationships with her team, which was crucial when navigating the ethical dilemma. Her long-standing role underscored her capability and reliability in managing critical care scenarios effectively.

Description of the Ethical Dilemma

The ethical dilemma involved a critically ill patient urgently needing a life-saving procedure. Despite the medical team's unanimous agreement on the necessity of the procedure, the patient's family was adamantly opposed to it due to their sincerely held religious beliefs. This

opposition created a significant ethical challenge for the healthcare team, who had to navigate the delicate balance between respecting the family's religious convictions and the moral duty to save the patient's life. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the patient was unconscious and had not provided any advance directives outlining their wishes in such scenarios. This absence of the patient's explicit consent or refusal placed the healthcare team in a difficult position, as they had to consider the legal and ethical implications of overriding the family's wishes. The dilemma highlighted the intricate interplay between medical ethics, patient autonomy, and cultural sensitivity in healthcare decision-making.

Decision-Making Approach

Dr. Smith employed a multifaceted approach to address the ethical dilemma, combining ethical decision-making models with her judgment. Recognizing the situation's complexity, she sought guidance from the hospital's ethics committee (Robichaux et al., 2022). This committee uses established ethical principles, including autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice, to navigate challenging decisions. Dr. Smith facilitated comprehensive discussions involving the patient's family, the healthcare team, and the ethics committee to ensure all perspectives were considered. Throughout these discussions, the principle of autonomy—respecting the patient's and their family's wishes—emerged as the most critical factor. Dr. Smith acknowledged the family's religious beliefs and firm stance against the life-saving procedure. After carefully weighing the ethical principles and the potential consequences, she honored the family's wishes. This decision was made with the understanding that respecting the patient's autonomy was paramount, even though it conflicted with the medical team's inclination to perform the procedure to save the patient's life (Bruun et al., 2022).

Outcome or Resolution of the Issue

The patient did not undergo the life-saving procedure and, unfortunately, passed away shortly afterward. The resolution was in line with the family's wishes, and the hospital staff provided palliative care to ensure the patient's comfort during their final moments.

Impact on Those Involved

The process had a profound impact on all parties involved. The family was grateful that their beliefs were respected, though the loss deeply saddened them. The healthcare team, including Dr. Smith, experienced emotional and moral distress and a sense of ethical fulfillment knowing they honored the patient's autonomy.

Use of Experience in Future Ethical Dilemmas

Dr. Smith has since used this experience to guide her through other ethical dilemmas. She emphasizes the importance of early and clear communication with patients and families regarding advance directives and religious beliefs. This experience has reinforced her commitment to involving ethics committees in complex cases to ensure balanced and well-considered decisions.

Personal Reflection on the Interview

Ethical Principles Involved

The primary ethical principles involved in this dilemma were autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. Autonomy was paramount, as it entailed respecting the patient's right to self-determination through the family's wishes. This principle underscores the importance of honoring the patient's values and beliefs even when family members convey them in the absence of advance directives (Bruun et al., 2022). Beneficence and non-maleficence were also significant, reflecting the healthcare team's dual obligations to do good and prevent harm. These principles required careful consideration of the potential benefits and risks of the proposed

medical intervention. Justice was equally important, ensuring that the patient's family received fair treatment and their religious beliefs were respected, maintaining equity in care and decision-making processes.

reaction to the Situation and Response

My reaction to this situation was one of deep reflection on the complexities of ethical decision-making in healthcare. Dr. Smith's response highlighted the delicate balance healthcare professionals must maintain between respecting patient autonomy and pursuing beneficent actions (Bruun et al., 2022). It was enlightening to see how ethical theories are applied in practice, providing a real-world context to theoretical concepts learned in class. The situation underscored the profound emotional impact of such decisions on healthcare providers, who must navigate the fine line between professional responsibilities and ethical considerations. Additionally, it highlighted the emotional toll on patients' families, who must reconcile their beliefs with the realities of medical interventions (Robichaux et al., 2022).

Reflection on Learning

This interview has profoundly influenced my perspective on ethical decision-making in healthcare. It underscored the importance of considering all moral principles—autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice—when faced with ethical dilemmas. The experience highlighted the value of involving multidisciplinary teams, including ethics committees, in resolving complex dilemmas, as they provide diverse perspectives and support balanced decision-making (Haahr et al., 2020). Furthermore, the interview reinforced the necessity of clear communication and planning with patients and families to navigate ethical challenges effectively. This approach helps ensure that patient preferences are understood and respected, ultimately enhancing healthcare practice's quality of care and moral integrity.

Conclusion

The assignment provided a rich, real-world perspective on applying ethical principles in healthcare. Through the interview with Dr. Smith, we gained insights into how moral dilemmas are addressed in practice and the significant impact these decisions have on all involved parties. Key takeaways include respecting patient autonomy, the role of ethics committees, and the need for clear communication and advance directives. This experience will undoubtedly enhance our understanding and application of ethical decision-making in our future healthcare careers.

References

- Bruun, H., Milling, L., Mikkelsen, S., & Huniche, L. (2022). Ethical challenges experienced by prehospital emergency personnel: A practice-based model of analysis. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 23(1), 80. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-022-00821-9>
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- Robichaux, C., Grace, P., Bartlett, J., Stokes, F., Saulo, L. M., & Turner, M. (2022). Ethics Education for Nurses: Foundations for an Integrated Curriculum. *Journal of Nursing Education*, 61(3), 123–130. <https://doi.org/10.3928/01484834-20220109-02>