

The Ethics of Looking the Other Way

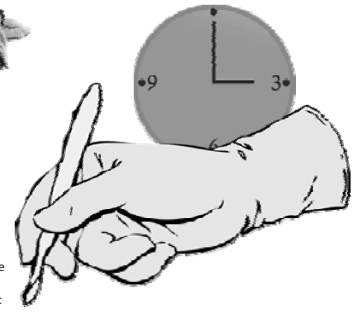
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Dog Tired

It is three o'clock in the morning and you are just finishing the fourth appendectomy for the night. The surgeon asks the charge nurse to send for the oncology patient who needs their mediport removed in anticipation of discharge.

You are tired, the surgeon is tired, and you have both been working nonstop. You understand how fatigue affects your skills, but you also know that you can perform that anesthetic in your sleep. You are familiar with the literature on fatigue and surgical outcome.



Outline

- ① How can I *recognize* an ethical dilemma?
- ② How can one *approach* resolution?
- ③ The costs of *looking the other way*.
- ④ Application of *Professionalism* principles to a *Culture of Safety*.

Recognize an Ethical Dilemma

- 🐶 Discomfort.
- 🐶 Disagreement.
- 🐶 Identify your Values
 - 🐶 Facts in conflict?

Recognize Discomfort

Does not fit with your values or conscience.

Disagreement

Conflict with someone's values.
Other factors not universally known.
Differing interpretations of data, rules.

Values

- 🏢 Institutional Values
- 👤 Personal Values
- ⚔️ Conflicts

An Approach to Ethical Dilemmas

- ① Identify the *Ethical Dilemma*.
- ② Methodical review of *Points of View*.
 - ① Keep an open mind
 - ② Consider framing
- ③ Determination of *Shared Values*.
- ④ Test *Solution* against *Shared Values*.

Mission

To improve the health of our patients through the provision of high-quality, coordinated programs of patient care, education, research and advocacy.

Vision

We will be the leader in providing the best healthcare outcomes for our patients. We will be the driving force, in partnership with others, in providing our patients and their families with an integrated healthcare delivery system. We will be a national leader in research and education.

An Approach to Ethical Dilemmas

- ① Identify the *Ethical Dilemma*.
- ② Methodical review of *Points of View*.
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Examples

- Adherence to clinical care guidelines.
- Accuracy of documentation.
- Ready, set, anesthesia! (shortages).
- Post-anesthesia follow-up.
- Comfort with checklists.
- Other impaired conditions.

Ethical Dilemma

What is the Culture at your Institution?

Air Safety



Oxygen Generator

- ① Removed from the MD-80.
- ② Safety cap not put in place.
- ③ Marked with wrong tag (repairable).
- ④ Signed-off by two mechanics.
- ⑤ Signed-off by supervisor.
- ⑥ Stored in wrong box.
- ⑦ Stored in wrong place.
- ⑧ Transferred to ValuJet property area.
- ⑨ Brought to flight 592.
- ⑩ Signed-off by cargo specialist and first officer.

Does Productivity Pressure Adversely Affect Outcome?

Yes it does

- Time pressure.
- Drug and material shortages.
- Reduced staff.
- Training and experience of staff members.
- Facility and equipment upgrades.
- Maintenance issues.

No it doesn't

- Compensate in every area.
- More efficiency means more & happier patients?

Culture of Safety

Each and every person taking responsibility for the outcome.

- Stock meds, instruments, disposables, blood.
- Clean facilities, proper environment
- Learn the latest, incorporate in practice as appropriate.
- Maintain skills in relevant disciplines.
- Practice techniques which help the team to produce the best outcome.

What type of Behavior?

A surgeon makes a sarcastic comment to the ICU nurse who calls with a concern about a patient not looking well in the middle of the night.

A week later, the same nurse but a different patient...

Professionalism

Self Effacement
Self Sacrifice
Compassion
Integrity

Healthcare Culture of Safety

Professional duties:

Patient first.
Respect for all team members.
Learn and use skills to keep everyone engaged.
Know that problems will arise anyway.
Stay engaged, and
Keep looking for ways to improve.

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*Simulation Study of Rested Versus Sleep-deprived
Anesthesiologists*

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