Organ Donation – Approaching Families at the End of Life

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Conflicts of Interests

I have No Conflicts of Interests.
Why look at how we Approach Requests for Donation?

• Public and Health care professionals strongly support Organ Donation.
• Canadian deceased donation rates are less than 50% of the best performing countries.
• Families under stress have difficulty navigating organ donation decisions.
• Leading programs have demonstrated that improved conversations can lead to “improved family decision making”, improved family satisfaction and have a positive impact on donation rates.
Developing Canadian Best Practise Recommendations

• Workshop held February 2014
• 44 Participants
  – International Experts in Conversation about organ donation.
• Exhaustive literature review/ Environmental Scan of current guidelines, legal review of Canadian Donation, consent and requesting legislation.
Recommendations 1.

• Effective Conversations with Families
  – Effective conversations with families of potential donors are collaborative, compassionate, and supportive, providing meaningful information regarding donation and its value. This supports families in reaching an **optimal and enduring decision** that is also respectful of the wishes of the potential donor.
2. Approach All Families

• Approach the family of every potential donor and offer the opportunity for donation.
• Notify the Organ Donation Organization as early as possible and before the initial donation conversation with the family.
• All families deserve an opportunity to make this gift of generosity.
3. Pre-approach Planning

- Elements of Pre-approach Planning
- Convene a team huddle with Organ Donation Organization donor Coordinator and key members of the health care team prior to discussion with families. At a minimum, include the donor coordinator, most responsible physician, and primary bedside nurse(s).
4. Topics in Pre-Approach Planning

• To ensure a well-planned approach, include the following topics in the team huddle:
  – Review information about patient, including medical status, eligibility, and prior donor registration/expressed intent to donate if available
  – Identify family members and related issues or conflicts that may impact decision-making.
  – Determine where and when the initial conversation should take place.
  – Determine who will lead the initial conversation with the family, who else will be in the room and what their roles will be.
5. Clear Communication of Grave prognosis and Death

• NDD- ensure the family has a clear understanding of neurological death, and has accepted the death before discussing donation.

• DCD- hold donation discussion after the consensual decision to withdraw life sustaining therapies is made.
  – Decouple if at all possible in DCD.
6. Communication Style

• When communicating with families, demonstrate sensitive, compassionate, and caring behaviour with a focus on family well-being.
  – Use a confident and positive approach, rather than a guarded or apologetic approach.
  – Do not use aggressive or coercive language, or strategies that polarize families.
7. Supporting Families

• Support the family during and after donation discussions, regardless of whether they consent to donation.
  – Provide a dedicated, trained health care organ professional who focuses on family support throughout and after the process for the duration of family’s stay at the hospital.
  – Provide post-donation grief support/follow-up services and donor recognition.
8. Requester Skills and Characteristics

- The following skills and traits are essential in leading donation conversation with families:
  - Good communicator, listener, facilitator, with high emotional and cultural intelligence.
  - Open, honest, collaborative, and patient
  - Self-aware, non-judgemental
  - Comfortable in dealing with families in crisis
  - Trained and experienced in dealing with conflict
  - Compassionate
  - Passionate and knowledgeable about organ donation
  - Able to work well with a variety of personalities.

- Provide structured, formal training and competency assessments for individuals leading organ donation conversations.
The Report

• The Full report is available on the Canadian Blood Services Web site.

• www.organsandtissues.ca

• *If you are engaged in organ donation you simply must* read this report.

• *It contains literally dozens of practise changing ideas and references.*

• Journal Club?
• Thank You

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