

Death and Dying in the Critical Care Unit

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Dying with Dignity

Death and Dying in the Critical Care Across America

- 540,000 Americans die in ICU's annually
- 1 in 5 receive ICU services before they die
- 59% of all hospital deaths occur in the ICU
- 80% of all terminal inpatient costs

McAdam & Puntillo, 2010

Death and Dying in Critical Care Across America (cont.)

- 28% of Medicare patients who die are treated in ICU's in last 6 months of life
- 20% of American deaths occur in a critical care unit or soon after receiving ICU care

Angus et al., 2004

The Need for Improved Care at the End of Life (EOL)

- Early to mid 1900's
- Current Health Management

Coyle, 2010; Saunders, 2004

Cause of Death/Demographic and Social Trends

	Early 1900s	Current
Medicine's Focus	Comfort	Cure
Cause of Death	Infectious Diseases/ Communicable Diseases	Chronic Illnesses
Death rate	1720 per 100,000 (1900)	741.0 per 100, 000 (2011)
Average Life Expectancy	50	78.2
Site of Death	Home	Institutions
Caregiver	Family	Strangers/ Health Care Providers
Disease/Dying Trajectory	Relatively Short	Prolonged

Different Causes of Death

- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Ethnic Origin
- Disparities

Dying with Dignity: What are the barriers to the improvement of the dying process and dying with dignity in the Critical Care Unit!!



Barriers to Quality Care at the End of Life (Cont.)

- Delayed or no access to palliative care services
- Confusion about when to consult or transfer
- Regulation of controlled substances
- Poor communication
- Lack of comprehensive plan of care

Barriers to Quality End-of-Life Care in Critical Care

- Failure to acknowledge the limits of medicine, especially critical care
- Inappropriate use of aggressive curative treatment
- Difficulties with prognostication
- Lack of adequate training of professionals

Coyne, 2010; Glare et al., 2003;
Vigano et al., 2000, NCP, 2009

Dying With Dignity

- Critical Care Nurses are a valuable resource to improve and address the needs of patients and families facing life-threatening illnesses in a variety of clinical settings.

Dying with Dignity!!

Who's Responsible?

- Doctors
- Nurses
- Families
- Patients
- Friends

Thank You!!