

Case study on ethics in healthcare administration

[Sociology](#), [Ethics](#)



ETHICS IN HEALTHCARE ADMINISTRATION

Mark's decision to stop the doctor from telling Annie about her cancer was informed by his concern for her welfare. He wanted his wife not to lose hope and to continue fighting for her life. This may have been kind on his part; however he had no right to keep her in the dark about her condition. Annie had the right to be informed of her decision as soon as the doctor confirmed the diagnosis. The doctor should have told her of the truth about her condition in the simplest language possible. He should have expressed the facts as simply and as accurately as he could. The only consideration the doctor could have made was to ensure that she had her next of kin close to her to give her support when she received the news (Purtilo & Cassel, 2010, p. 64).

The physician should therefore have spoken to Annie first about her condition before informing her spouse. This is because Annie deserved to have her medical information treated with privacy and confidentiality. All patients also have the right to informed consent in their treatment decisions. She had to undergo additional surgeries without knowing what she was being treated for. Finally she died without knowing what she was suffering from. Had she been fully informed, she may have decided not to undergo any more surgery. As much as the husband was looking out for her interest, they failed to consider her choices in the matter.

There are several ethical dilemmas in this situation. The first is whether a spouse has the power to remove the consent of a patient. In this case, Mark told the doctor not to inform Annie about her condition and the doctor

agreed. Annie was left in the dark although administrative ethics require that the patient first to be informed unless it is a minor. She was deliberately given false information to protect her from the reality of her ailment. The second ethical issue is the decision to conduct another operation on her without fully informed consent from her. Annie may have approved of the second surgery thinking it was for her narrowed colon while it was not.

Nobody knows the decision she would have taken had she been fully aware of the extent of her cancer. She may have chosen to seek a second opinion which is fully within her rights as a patient. She may also have decided to go ahead with the doctor's advice and go ahead with the surgery. Another possible decision she would have taken would have been to go home and enjoy her final days with her family. Since she was not given a chance to decide, we may never know which decision she would have taken.

All the doctor's decisions should have been guided by the principles of a patient's rights and responsibilities as stipulated by the National Health Council (Pozgar, 2009, p. 105). The first right of the patient is to informed consent in all their treatment decisions. If the patient is not a minor and they are in a fit mental state, they should be given all the information pertaining to their condition and its treatment. The patient should be given this information in time and without having their confidentiality violated. The doctor should also give their patients this information concisely in a language that the patient can easily understand (Raymond, 2009, p. 138). Other rights include the right to change healthcare providers whenever they feel dissatisfied with the current provider or seek a different opinion. In all decisions, the doctor should have sought the opinion of his patient first and

not her husband because she was mentally capable of making decisions regarding her health. It should have been her decision to decide whether to inform her husband and family or not. She should also have been allowed to choose the course of treatment to take based on the doctor's advice. Because of the decisions Mark made for Annie, she died without knowing what was killing her, this was not right.

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