

Ethical issues in nursing term paper

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



The healthcare dilemma arises from the condition of a newborn in intensive care that may require blood transfusion as a lifesaving procedure which the mother cannot approve due to religious beliefs. The blood transfusion would help to save the life of the new born and give it a chance to live and lead a healthy life, its absence could lead to a preventable death. The physician's dilemma would be to do the greatest good while causing the least harm to the patient.

The ethical dilemma is that the patient's mother has consented verbally to the transfusion but cannot sign a written consent. The mother is afraid of defying her parents, who are strict Jehovah's witnesses, because she is depended on them. The clinician owes a primary duty of care to the newborn. The mother, as the parent, is required by law to give informed consent (Burkhardt, & Nathaniel, 2008). In this case only verbal consent is available. The entire procedure conflicts with the interests of the grandparents of the patient on whom the primary subjects are dependants. The grandparents' objections are not consequential in law.

The first fact is that there is a sick newborn that needs blood transfusion to save its life. Secondly, the mother has given informed consent verbally and not in writing. Thirdly, performing the procedure could jeopardize the security of mother and child because it defies the religious beliefs of their benefactors. Legally, physicians can disregard parental wishes with regard to transfusions (Burkhardt, & Nathaniel, 2008). However after the procedure, mother and child may not have a home to go to. This situation will not be in the best interest of the patient and the mother.

The physician can proceed with the transfusion since the mother has

consented to the procedure and wants her baby's life to be saved. It would be imperative for the physician to maintain patient confidentiality by sharing information with the newborn's mother only. The physician should disclose all available options and recommend the one that accommodates the parents' religious beliefs. If transfusion is the only available option, the attending physician can offer to call the concerned social services office and find alternative support for the patient and mother. These steps would solve the issue by obeying the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence and non-maleficence. (Burkhardt, & Nathaniel, 2008)

References

Burkhardt, M. A. & Nathaniel, A. K. (2008). Ethics & issues in contemporary nursing. 3rd Edition, Albany, NY: Delmar.