

## SFHCHS95

### Explain to the family the patient's condition and likely death



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#### Overview

In the case of potential non-heart beating donation, before any request is made for organ donation, it is essential that the patient's family understand that it has become futile to continue to treat the patient. This standard exercised by a clinician involves being sensitive to the responses and likely feelings of the family and a skill in conveying the processes that are leading the patient to their death.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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#### Performance criteria

*You must be able to:*

- P1 have already established with colleagues that further treatment of the patient is futile and that, at some stage, active treatment should be withdrawn to be followed by the patient's death
- P2 hold the conversation with the family before, and separate from, discussion of donation
- P3 allow the family to choose whether to have the conversation at the bedside or somewhere else privately
- P4 show respect for the patient and their family
- P5 allow the family to express their understanding of what is happening first and build on their knowledge
- P6 explain the patient's condition, its causes and its expected outcome
- P7 explain the procedures and definitions involved in the determination and certification of death (e.g. irreversibility of the cessation of circulatory and respiratory functions in cardiopulmonary death)
- P8 answer the family's questions factually
- P9 enquire about and respect cultural, religious and other influences and expectations
- P10 distinguish between the cessation of active treatment and the moment of death
- P11 be sensitive to the family's failure to absorb information in this crisis and be prepared to repeat and re-explain uncritically
- P12 respond to the suggestion of donation if it is volunteered by arranging a discussion, immediately if the family wishes it
- P13 detect any references to the patient that might indicate how they would have felt about donation (e.g. blood donor, other altruistic acts, interest in medical matters)
- P14 recognise where the family are in the grieving process and how this may influence the way they should subsequently be approached regarding donation

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### Knowledge and understanding

*You need to know and understand:*

- K1 anatomy and physiology of the human body
- K2 psychological care skills/loss counselling
- K3 issues of maintenance of patient confidentiality in the critical care and donation contexts
- K4 evidence of beliefs about donation and transplantation among informed and uninformed religious and cultural groups (e.g. typical mistaken beliefs that a religion opposes transplantation, religious pronouncements such as Muslim fatwa in favour of transplantation)
- K5 legal definitions of death
- K6 procedures for certification of death
- K7 procedures for determination of death by cardiorespiratory arrest
- K8 clinical management of an intensive care patient
- K9 clinical management of a potential non heart beating donor
- K10 guidelines for withdrawal of treatment
- K11 how to break bad news
- K12 psychology of altruistic action
- K13 beliefs about death and dying
- K14 roles of other members of the multidisciplinary
- K15 how to adapt communication styles in ways which are appropriate to different people (e.g. culture, language or special needs)
- K16 the importance of establishing rapport and how to do so
- K17 how to ask questions, listen carefully and summarise back
- K18 the importance of encouraging individuals to ask questions and how to do so
- K19 the religious beliefs of different cultures
- K20 the effects of different cultures and religions on care management and effects on family dynamics
- K21 the importance of involving individuals in discussions, and how to do so
- K22 how to negotiate effectively with individuals, families and other professionals
- K23 the principles of evidence-based practice, and how to apply them
- K24 how to explain difficult subjects in an emotional context

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### Additional Information

#### External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: Core 1 Communication

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**Suite** Clinical Health Skills

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