

Policies on Clinical Ethics

Sasebo City General Hospital

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The best medical care for patients is based on human rights, patient rights, and clinical ethics. The following ethical policies should be considered as a reference for addressing ethical issues in medical care.

1. Respect the patient's dignity

Respecting the dignity of patients means valuing their beliefs, supporting their ability to live a full life on their own terms, and treating them as valuable and equal individuals. The healthcare team must pay special attention to vulnerable people, such as the elderly, children, people with dementia, people with disabilities, and members of the LGBT community.

2. Respect the patient's wishes

If the patient has the capacity to make decisions, those decisions should be respected, even if they conflict with the advice of the healthcare team or family members. However, if the decision may affect the patient or others, the healthcare team should discuss it thoroughly with the patient.

3. Ensure that patients have the right to receive information and make decisions about their health.

The healthcare team should give patients all necessary information and allow them to make decisions about their medical care without interference.

4. Tell the truth

The healthcare team helps patients make decisions by providing accurate and easy-to-understand information about their diagnosis, treatment, medical and nursing care, and prognosis.

5. Keep promises

Keeping promises to patients builds trust between the healthcare team and the patient. Medical care is based on mutual trust, and keeping promises is extremely important. However, extreme caution should be exercised when keeping promises may conflict with other principles of medical ethics.

6. Protect privacy

The healthcare team will comply with the law regarding the protection of personal information. Information obtained in the course of providing medical care (for example, information about a patient's or family member's illness or family relationship) is "sensitive personal information" and must be handled with special care. The healthcare team has a duty to protect patients from unfair discrimination, prejudice and other disadvantages arising from the disclosure of "sensitive personal information". The patient's consent is required for the disclosure of personal information. However, the duty of confidentiality may be waived if there is a clear possibility of harm to a third party as a result of the duty of confidentiality.

7. Respect the patient's best interests

The healthcare team should explain medical information in easily understandable language, respect the patient's sense of life and values, and prioritize the patient's best interests when providing medical care. If there is a conflict between the healthcare team's decision and the patient's wishes, the healthcare team should try to reach an agreement through dialogue with the patient. If agreement cannot be reached, the patient's decision will be respected. However, in an emergency situation requiring a life-saving decision, the healthcare team's decision may be given priority. If the patient is unable to make a decision, even with the assistance of the healthcare team, the decision should be made in consultation with the patient's family or representative to protect the patient's best interests.

8. Ensure fair allocation of medical resources

When multiple patients are using limited medical resources at the same time, such as in an intensive care unit, there may be conflicts in allocation. The healthcare team provides medical resources to patients in a fair manner according to their medical needs.