

Detailed Information for Project no. 127135

General Information

Title: Advance directives & advance care planning among elective surgery patients_Questionings for Intensive care medicine

Persons and institutions related to this project

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Abstract (*Contents of abstracts are not edited by SNSF; they are responsibility of the author*)

Last update: 16.03.2010

International interests for Advance Directives (AD) have emerged in the last few decades, on the ethical principle of the patient's autonomy. The US has made a long practice & lawful anchoring since 1991. In Europe, especially in Switzerland, the extent of the concept is not known. A Swiss federal law is in preparation. An AD is a description of one's future preferences for medical treatment, made in anticipation of a time when he may become incompetent. The patient may choose to designate a health care surrogate (HCS), that is, a trusted person that could speak in his place. The literature reports their importance, but also their complexity for health & public policies. The general low percentages of people having AD/HCS demonstrate the difficulties to introduce such tools. Our project is to address the question of advanced care planning & the reasons to lead patients to want AD/HCS or not in the context of planned major surgery (heart surgeries were chosen due to their homogeneity, the magnitude of stress related to them (commonly known vital organ, patient more likely to think about AD/HCS), the period of ICU stay, mean age of 65 years, & the low percentage of death). We also want to verify whether undergoing major surgery may influence the attitude of patients, to assess the incidence of AD/HCS in this population & how frequently people without AD/HCS are willing to enter the process. 3 different angles (3 distinct protocols) are investigated: patient (interviews, random assignment to 2 groups: Intervention Group, studied before & one week after surgery; Control Group, studied 1 week after surgery), family (interviews) & primary care physicians (+some specialists, mailed questionnaires) in Geneva. Light will be shed on the factors that influence the attitudes of patients, their family members & physicians towards the DA/HCS. They should allow the legal & medical disciplines to better understand the reasons why DA/HCS are difficult to implement, while the theoretical legal concepts are so attractive. The findings will be published in medical & legal journals to help join the efforts of both disciplines to respect the patient's autonomy.