

Ethics, health and the community....

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Health Equity: From Challenges to Solutions

Vulnerability, community and equity....

- Clearly many of the most vulnerable people in our society are living in the community yet resources are not matched.
- The priority of our health care system to focus on *acute* rather than *chronic* illness is evident in community health needs.

The study and understanding of Community Health Care Ethics

- Minimal
- Poorly reflected in the ethics literature
- Requires people with significant community experience to identify and study ethical questions

Vulnerable people...

- Community work offers much closer look at the elderly in need and sometimes vulnerable to others.
- A very different view of people with mental health needs.

Implications of performing professional duties on clients premises

- “My house you will do as I say”.
- Can contribute to less respect given to professional duties and obligations of community health care workers
- Shift in perceptions of power
- Home location may lead clients to see staff as employees
- Differences in cultural perceptions of the role and meaning of working in another person’s home.

Consent and Capacity

- Consent and capacity a greater challenge without feedback from colleagues.
- Confidence in this domain lower in community health care significantly lower than hospital based care.

Abuse of patients

- Elderly Clients who do not wish to disclose or act on the abuse puts community health care workers in a difficult ethically challenging situation.
- Respect for autonomy clashes with duty to protect and justice.

Unique challenges...

- Safety
- Limited resources to deal with challenges..
- Racial prejudice/abuse

Mixed Messages about Community Health

- A lot of talk in media and politics about the importance of community health.
- Yet, comparatively little resources, in relation to technology driven services.
- More focus acceptance prestige to hospital care.
- Has a significant effect on community workers perception of their role.

More support needed in assessing and supporting patient choices...

- Implications of client's autonomous choices more apparent in community setting.
- “Danger to self” interpreted very differently in the community than in hospital.
- “Danger to others” also interpreted very differently in the community than in hospital.

Inter-agency relations

- Serious problems in this area with considerable ethical and equity implications
- Vital info not always shared or available
- Different standards (i.e.. DNR consistency)
- Confusion related to privacy legislation leads to important information being unavailable to front line workers.