A Search for Compassion within Patient Stories: A documentary film project

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Background

Lown, B., Rosen, J., Marttila, J. (2011) “An Agenda for Improving Compassionate Care: A Survey Shows About Half of Patients Say Such Care Is Missing,” *Health Affairs*

A definition

“Compassionate care addresses the patient’s innate need for connection and relationships and is based on attentive listening and a desire to understand the patient’s context and perspective”

Impact on health outcomes, adherence to treatment, cost of care, trust

But how can we TEACH this definition?
Goal and Inspiration

Goal:
- Develop a tool that is useful in teaching medical students the delivery of compassion centered care

Inspiration:
- Professionalism of Medicine Course
- Dewar, B. (2001) “Valuing compassion through definition and measurement,” *Nursing Management*

Challenges to measuring compassion:
- It is rarely articulated clearly
- It includes a range of factors that are not reduced easily to single measurable acts
- It can manifest differently in different contexts
- It means different things to different people
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote from patient, stuff or family member about what works well in relation to caring</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>‘We were privileged in many ways when visiting my husband in the last few days of his life. Basic things like being given permission to use the kitchen meant we could make tea and coffee or microwave a meal. The relatives’ lounge included a sofa bed and a shower, so I didn’t have to go home, and we could be at my husband’s bedside 24 hours a day. This was especially important to me.’</em></td>
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<th>Positive-care practice statement</th>
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<td>Learning about the little things that matter to people and adapting existing policy is important. For one relative, knowing that she could be on the ward 24 hours a day, if necessary, was important.</td>
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<th>Staff commentary</th>
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<td>Patients and relatives are not supposed to use the kitchen; some staff let them do this, others do not, but you cannot criticise those staff who do not, because they are just doing what is being asked of them.</td>
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<th>Agreed action</th>
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<td>Charge nurse to find out the managers’ perspective on this policy. Charge nurse finds out that there is a special fridge stocked with food in the hospital for relatives at night. This was not widely known and was subsequently put in the new guidance sheet for relatives that staff and relatives developed together. Tea and coffee facilities were put into relatives’ room so that they did not have to go in the kitchen.</td>
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Process

- IRB Approval for a Film Project
  - Drs. Mary Chamberlin, Konstantin Dragnev, Camilo Fadul, Joe O’Donnell, Marc Pipas and Pano Rodis
- Filming
  - 10 oncology patients receiving treatment at DHMC for various cancers: appendiceal, breast, brain, colorectal, and lung
The Patient Perspective

- Tell me your story
- Can you provide a snapshot representing a moment in which you received compassion centered care?
The Patient Perspective

- Kernels of wisdom from our future patients can plant early seeds of compassionate care education
“Be kinder than necessary because everyone is fighting a battle”

-J.M. Barrie