

Deciding with Heart

Supporting the shared decision making process about life-prolonging treatments in patients with advanced heart failure

Problem

Patients with advanced heart failure must face choices of withholding or withdrawing life-prolonging treatments. To make a choice, the patient must consider their goals, their preferences, and the impact of treatments on their quality of life. Patients with advanced heart failure are not always fully aware of the choices and consequences of treatment and care.

Healthcare providers should approach treatments decision using shared decision making. The communication among healthcare providers, the patient and family in the shared decision moments for life-prolonging treatments should be supported.

Shared decision making

Shared decision making is a process in which patients, relatives, physicians, and nurses are encouraged to share thoughts and decisions upon treatment options.

Advanced heart failure

Stage D of heart failure, the patient is not expected to survive in the following 12 months. In this stage, conventional heart therapies and symptom management strategies are no longer working.

Life-prolonging treatments

Any medical procedure, treatment, with no reasonable expectation of recovery from a terminal condition. When applied to a patient with a terminal condition, they prolong the dying process.



The booklet

The booklet “Deciding with heart” was created to support the communication between healthcare providers and patients in the shared decision making process.

It provides information about life-prolonging treatments for patients with advanced heart failure and sensitise them in individuating their values and preferences.

The booklet helps to start a conversation between nurses and patients about making the best choice. The booklet can be used to explain the patients’ prognosis and their treatment options in order to support them in the decision making process.



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