The attached case study of a patient with Huntington’s chorea raises a number of ethical issues.

For the project due September 8, 2006, you will need to

- Identify the ethical issues involved with Huntington’s chorea as discussed in the attached case study.
- Choose one of these ethical issues and formulate a search query.
- Run a Medline search
- Print the search strategy and 3-5 relevant citations (author/title/source) that best answer your search query.

You will need to submit the following:
1. A list of ethical issues identified in the case study
2. Your search query
3. The search strategy and 3-5 relevant citations (author/title/source) that best answer your search query.

**Due: Friday, September 8, 2006 by 4pm**
Assignment is to be turned in to Diane Stancik in the Office of Educational Affairs (SSOM, Room 320)
Case D

A 48-year-old woman presents to her neurologist with a complaint of abnormal jerky involuntary movements. The physician suspects a diagnosis of Huntington's chorea and confirms this suspicion with genetic testing. He explains to the patient that Huntington's disease is an incurable neurological condition, which involves the gradual development of uncontrolled abnormal movements and eventually progresses to irreversible dementia and death within 10 years of diagnosis. He also explains that the condition is inherited in an autosomal dominant fashion with the result that there is a 50% chance her children may carry the gene for the condition although at this point it would be asymptomatic. The patient refuses to give permission to the physician to inform her two daughters of the diagnosis, despite the fact that they are both in their early twenties and one of them is planning to get married and start a family within the next six months.

At subsequent visits the patient is profoundly depressed despite treatment with antidepressant medication and at one point asks for her physician’s assistance with committing suicide. This option is gently refused and the patient is referred to a psychiatrist for further evaluation.

Two weeks later the patient leaves a voicemail message for her older daughter explaining that she has taken an overdose of medications and does not wish to be resuscitated. The daughter finds the message on returning from work and upon rushing to her mother's home finds her unconscious. The patient is taken to the emergency room where her daughter explains the circumstances and the content of the voicemail message to the ER physician. The daughter is still unaware of the underlying diagnosis, which led to her mother's depression and suicide attempt.

The emergency room physician consults with the neurologist who informs him of the diagnosis of Huntington's disease.

The patient's clinical status is deteriorating rapidly and urgent decisions need to be made regarding her treatment.
Relationship of this small group session to the philosophy of patient centered medicine.
All physicians face ethical issues surrounding their patients at some point in their career. This group provides a framework by which to approach these issues. One of the main points to always ask yourself is: “Who is the patient.” Below is a session summary to help guide your thoughts.

**Session Summary**
In this session, an introductory approach to ethical analysis will be learned. The session highlighted ethical systems and the use of principles in medical ethics. A virtue-based approach to ethics is briefly presented. The use of the ethical workup is emphasized.

**KEY POINTS**

• Ethical analysis is grounded in an understanding of the human person.
• A variety of different understandings of what it means to be human have given rise to a number of ethical systems. Utilitarian and deontological ethical reasoning are the most commonly defended approaches to analyzing an ethical problem.
• In the United States, five key ethical principles are commonly invoked in making decisions. These principles are prima facie rules: one follows the precept unless there is a very good reason to differ.

Frequently, ethical conflicts involve cases where the principles are in conflict. Individuals who hold to a variety of ethical systems may all invoke the same principles when considering a course of action.

The five principles are respect for autonomy, beneficence, avoiding paternalism, non-maleficence, and justice.

• You should understand and be able to define the following terms:
  • subjectivism
  • cultural relativism
  • teleology
  • deontology
  • Divine command theory
  • autonomy
  • beneficence
  • paternalism
  • non-maleficence
  • justice
  • prima facie rules
  • utilitarianism
  • consequentialism
  • palliative care
  • Do Not Resuscitate order
  • Hospice care
Criteria for evaluating Medical Students’ Research Project

The following criteria will be applied when evaluating the assigned search strategy. Also be sure to include the author/title/source for 3 –5 relevant citations along with the strategy.

1. Identify ethical issues
2. Formulate appropriate search query
3. Select appropriate database and timeframe
4. Analyze the question and identify relevant searchable concepts
5. Choose appropriate MeSH subject heading for each concept
6. Use Explode option if appropriate
7. Effectively narrow results as needed
   a. Select subheading(s)
   b. Use correct Boolean logic to combine concepts
   c. Apply appropriate limits (i.e.: age groups, language)
   d. Use Focus
   e. Add additional MeSH headings
8. Search efficiency (i.e. did not limit every search statement, did not use unnecessary search terms)