

End-of-life Care: Challenges and Obligations in Setting Limits to Life-sustaining Therapy

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Abstract

It is now generally accepted that the withholding or withdrawal of interventions that serve only to prolong the dying process is appropriate. Setting limits to life-sustaining therapy are now common practice. However, making such decisions can be challenging. They are also not uncommonly a source of disagreement between the physician and the patient or surrogate. The potential for strained patient-physician relationship can be mitigated by patient-centred, goal-specific care with its emphasis on effective communication, a sense of timing and attention to the various dimensions of the illness experience.

Ann Acad Med Singapore 2003; 32:785-9

Key words: Communication, Medical futility, Palliative care, Withholding treatment

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