

Home Health “Technocare”: Transforming Home in Hospital?

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The notion of Home Health Care

- Variety of Home Health Care
 - Different categories of patients : with chronic disease, in recovery after an operation, elderly people,...
 - Different forms : visit by health professionals, use of technologies at different levels of sophistication
- « Home Health Technocare »
 - = Use of sophisticated technologies for home health care

The notion of Home Health Care

- Meaning of « home » and « hospital »:
 - Home : - private place (shared with family)
 - positive perception: place of intimacy, integrity, security, independence, comfort, control,...
 - Hospital : - public or community place, secured care thanks to professionals (experts) working in specially designed infrastructures and using sophisticated technologies
 - negative perception: unknown, impersonal place, breach from everyday life, no control, reminds you that you are sick,...
- These differences tend to disappear with the development of home health care (and specifically of home technocare)

Implications of the development of Home Health (Techno)Care

- Invasion of home by caregivers and technologies
 - => Traditional meaning of home disappears
 - => Specificities of care at hospital are shared with care at home (sophisticated technologies, expert professionals,...)
- An identical quality of health care ?
 - Identical quality => competent caregivers (proper training and emotionally competent)
 - => home suitable for care and technologies
 - What about sophisticated technologies transferred at home? (specific training for caregivers, risks of misuse of high-tech devices for the patient's health,... ?)

Implications of the development of Home Health (Techno)Care

- Disruption in relations and competencies
 - Modifications in family life (care at home, members become caregivers) => Necessary reorganisation
 - Diversity of caregivers and transfer of competences and responsibilities
 - => Question of responsibilities (misuse of high-tech device, dysfunction of such device, emergency contact always available? ...)
 - => Difficulties in the continuity of the care process and in the decision-making

Ethical reflexion on Home Health Technocare

- Need for reinterpretation of the 4 principles of Bioethics (Beauchamp and Childress)
(autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice)
- **Autonomy**
 - = Health care at home = object of a free and informed consent
 - It applies to the patient but has to be extended to family members
 - But : Do family members really have the choice to accept or refuse to collaborate to care? How can their consent be really informed? Should their consent be provisional and be reviewed regularly?

Ethical reflexion on Home Health Technocare

■ Nonmaleficence and Beneficence

- = Obligation to not inflict harm and to contribute to the patient's welfare
- But : what about « physical and emotional burden » for family? What about responsibilities?

■ Justice

- = Act fairly and allocate fairly scarce resources
- => Question of access to health care : what about decision based on financial considerations ? What about the absence of equality between patients because of differences in social and physical environment ?

Conclusion

- The implementation of home health care must be carefully discussed between the patient, his family and health professionals
- Getting care at home may not always be the best solution and has to remain one option among others

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