Chapter 1, Part 6: ETHICS IN ADVANCED PREHOSPITAL CARE

Introduction (1 of 2)
- In one survey, almost __________% of ALS calls in an urban system generated ethical conflict.
- In another survey, EMS providers reported frequent ethical problems related to patient ________________, hospital destinations, and advance directives.

Introduction (2 of 2)
- Other aspects include patient ________________, consent, the obligation to provide care, and research.

Ethics vs. Morals
- Ethics and morals are closely related concepts but distinctly separate.
- ________________ are the social, religious, or personal standards of right and wrong.
- ________________ are the rules or standards that govern the conduct of members of a particular group or profession.

Relationship of Ethical and Medical Issues with Medicine

Approaches to Making Ethical Decisions
- Ethical relativism suggests that each person must decide how to behave and whatever decision that person makes is okay.
- Some say, “Just do what is ________________ .”

Code of Ethics
- Many organizations have developed a code of ________________ over the years for their members.
- Most codes of ethics address broad humanitarian concerns and professional etiquette.
- Very few provide solid ________________ on the kind of ethical problems commonly faced by practitioners.

To gain and maintain the respect of their colleagues and their patients, it is vital that individual paramedics exemplify the principles and ________________ of their profession.

The single most important question a paramedic has to answer when faced with an ethical challenge is: WHAT IS IN THE ________________ BEST INTEREST?

4 Principles to Resolve Ethical Problems
- ________________ is the principle of doing good for the patient.
- ________________ is the obligation not to harm the patient.
- ________________ is a competent adult patient’s right to determine what happens to his or her own body.
- ________________ refers to the obligation to treat all patients fairly.

Quick Ways to Test Ethics
- ________________ test: asks whether you would be willing to undergo this procedure or action if you were in the patient’s place.
- ________________ test: asks whether you would want this action performed in all relevantly similar circumstances.
- ________________ justifiability test: asks whether you can defend or justify your actions to others.

Ethical Issues in Contemporary Paramedic Practice
- Resuscitation Attempts
- ________________
- ________________
- Allocation of Resources
- Obligation to Provide Care
Resuscitation Attempts
- Learn the local laws regarding Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders and Advanced Directives.
- Understand your local policy.
- “When in doubt, ____________________________________ .”

Confidentiality
- Your obligation to every patient is to maintain as confidential the information you obtained as a result of your participation in the medical situation.
- Reporting certain information such as ________________ neglect or elder abuse are exceptions.
- __________________________ regulations limit release on a “need to know” basis.

Consent (1 of 2)
- Patients of legal age have the right to decide what __________________________ they will receive.
- __________________________ consent may apply in cases where the patient is incapacitated or unable to communicate.

Consent
- Patients are generally able to consent or __________________________ care if they are alert and oriented, aware of their surroundings, and making sound judgments.
- When leaving the patient, he or she must understand the issues at hand and be able to make an __________________________ decision.

Allocation of Resources
- Several approaches to consider...
  - All patients could receive the __________________________ amount of attention.
  - Patients could receive resources based on __________________________
  - Patients could receive what someone has determined they’ve earned.
- __________________________ is a common field activity that demonstrates one method of allocating scarce resources.

Obligation to Provide Care
- A paramedic...
  - Has a responsibility to __________________________ others.
  - Is __________________________ to provide care without regard to the ability to pay or other criteria.
  - Has a strong ethical obligation to help others even while __________________________ .

Teaching
- Two possible ethical questions are raised when a student is caring for patients:
  - Whether or not patients should be informed that a __________________________ is working on them
  - How many __________________________ a student should be allowed to have in performing an intervention.

To avoid problems...
- Clearly __________________________ students as such.
- The preceptor should, when appropriate, inform the patient of the student’s presence and obtain the patient’s __________________________ .
- Take the student’s experience and skill level into account and have a pre-determined limit identified for the number of __________________________ at a procedure.

Professional Relations
● A paramedic answers to the ________________________________, the physician medical director, and to his employer.
● Sometimes conflict arises out of such relationships.
● Know your ________________________________ ...and communicate.

**Research**

● EMS research is only in its infancy but is ________________________________ to the advancement of EMS.
● Strict rules and guidelines must be followed when conducting patient care-related studies.
● Gaining the patient’s ________________________________ is paramount.