

# Ethical decisions at the end of life in dementia care

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# Dementia

- A fatal illness (?)
- Death due to complications?
- Death due to 'old age'?

Death

# Specific ethical issues

- Consent
- Capacity
- Information-sharing
- Futility
- Ordinary and extraordinary means
- Artificial nutrition and hydration
- Euthanasia
- Advance care planning

# Medical ethics

- Competence
- Compassion
- Non-abandonment

# Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners

- Medical Council of Ireland 2009

# Guide to Professional Conduct and Ethics for Registered Medical Practitioners

- Non-medical majority
- Plain English mark-approved by NALA

# 1 General Principles

- Integrity, compassion
- Sensitive attitude
- Good judgement and sound clinical advice
- Best evidence
- Continuous improvement

# 5 Dignity of the patient

- Including patients with disabilities, lack of consent

# 19 Nutrition and Hydration

- Basic needs
- Orally
- Alternate means which are possible and appropriate
- Burdens
- Risks
- Patient's wishes

## 22 End of Life Care

- Assisting patients, families and community in dealing with the reality of death
- Take care that the patient dies with dignity, in comfort and with as little suffering as possible
- No obligation for futile treatment, including ANH
- Patient's right to refuse
- Clear communication about what can and cannot be achieved
- Not participate in deliberate killing



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## **PALLIATIVE SEDATION**

Discussion Paper



Irish Association for Palliative Care

## **ARTIFICIAL HYDRATION IN TERMINALLY ILL PATIENTS**

Position Paper

## 26 Disclosure with patient's consent to relatives and carers

- Need consent, except risk of serious harm
- If patient cannot consent, consider best interests

# 34 Capacity to Consent

- Assume capacity
- Respect dignity and integrity
- Functional approach
- Where patient does not have capacity
  - best clinical benefit
  - past and present wishes
  - views of others who may be familiar with preferences, beliefs and values

# 41 Advance Care Planning

# Conclusion

- Ethics-that good should be done, and harm avoided
- The importance of being well informed and up to date
- Crisis usually avoidable, but decision making needs planning

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