



## 6th International Conference on Clinical Ethics Consultation

May 11-14, 2010 ♦ Portland Art Museum ♦ Portland, Oregon, USA

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### Abstract Submission Form – Papers

Please contact John Tuohey at [ethics@providence.org](mailto:ethics@providence.org) with any questions.

Name: Rebecca Volpe

Title/Degree: Clinical Ethics Fellow; Student

Institution: Fellowship: California Pacific Medical Center; Student: Saint Louis University Center for Health Care Ethics PhD program

Country: USA

Email: [rvolpe05@yahoo.com](mailto:rvolpe05@yahoo.com)

Phone including country code (<http://www.countrycallingcodes.com>): 1 (408) 416-1321

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Proposed title of paper: Expressed and Unexpressed Information Needs for Informed Consent in Health Care

Abstract with 3 clearly stated objectives in 250 words:

Research on the informed consent of patients to treatment consistently fails to imbed studies about the 'expressed' information needs of patients into the cognitive psychology literature about the 'unexpressed' information needs of patients: the type, quantity, order, display and framing that is most beneficial to patients in a health care setting. This research breakdown then carries over to the bedside, where healthcare practitioners also inadvertently divorce the expressed and unexpressed needs of patients for informed consent. Developing best practices for informed consent requires an interdisciplinary examination not only of stated (expressed) information needs generally found in the bioethics literature, but also information needs that are unstated (unexpressed) and often found in the cognitive-psychology literature.

One example of thinking about expressed and unexpressed information needs in tandem leads to an incongruence: patients report wanting 'all' the information (expressed) and yet the working memory model tells us that humans can only manage relatively small amounts of information at one time (unexpressed). Reconciling this discord, although important, may not be as crucial as simply recognizing its' existence and striving to strike a balance between the known information processing capacities of the patient and their desire for an abundance of information.

Objectives for this session include: 1) Understanding how the expressed and unexpressed information needs of patients contributes to gaining their informed consent, 2) Giving numerous examples of both types of informational needs, and 3) Articulating specific best practice methods for incorporating the expressed and unexpressed information needs of patients in treatment settings.

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If you have or will publish on this topic, please cite reference:

I am working with the Journal of Clinical Ethics on a resubmission.

Are you planning to or will you be willing to submit a poster along with your paper?

Yes     No