



6th International Conference on Clinical Ethics Consultation

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Abstract Submission Form – Papers

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Proposed title of paper: An Ethics Consultation Service: Experiences and Processes

Abstract with 3 clearly stated objectives in 250 words:

Presenter: Marty Smith, STD

Co-presenter: Courtenay Bruce, JD

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Ethics consultation services (ECSs) are commonplace in U.S. hospitals. How best to structure ethics consultations is discussed in the bioethics literature, but there is little data concerning processes of ethics consultations. This paper will provide a retrospective summation of one institution's experience and processes for providing 487 ethics consultations during a two-year period (2007 – 2008).

Based on queries of an Access data-base where standardized information of 31 data points for each consult is recorded, and based on analyses of free-text narratives written by on-call ethics consultants, aggregated data will be reported. With an emphasis on the processes of ethics consultations, reported information will include frequency and variability of activities and interventions during consultations (e.g., family and clinical team meetings, bedside conversations). A subset of these consultative activities are associated with labor-intensive consultations; therefore, factors predicting labor-intensive consultations and interventions used to address these demanding consultations will be addressed.

In addition to activities and interventions, information such as ethical issues triggering consultations, location of consultation activities (e.g., ICU, regular nursing floor, outpatient), documentation, and follow-up with stakeholders will be reported.

With this information, directors and staff of established and newly-instituted ECSs will gain insights for 1) rejuvenating and/or maintaining vibrant ECSs, and 2) determining staffing needs and requisite skills necessary for screening and hiring ethics consultants.

Learning Objectives:

1) Discuss frequency and variability of ethics consultation activities;

2) Identify factors predictive of labor-intensive consultations;

3) Describe staffing needs and requisite skills for establishing, rejuvenating or maintaining vibrant ethics consultation services.

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

N/A

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

Yes No