



*Northern Ireland Forum for Ethics
in Medicine and Healthcare*

Ethics & Care at the End of Life.

Date: 0900-17.00hrs Wednesday the 8th of November 2017.

Venue: The NI Hospice, Somerton Road, Belfast.

We are seeking CPD Accreditation for this event.

Additional information, including further details on each of the speakers, and instructions on how to register for this event, can be found on our website:

www.nief.org.uk

Speakers:

Georgina Morley (Bristol & Barts Health NHS Trust): *Moral Distress in End-of-Life Care.*

Whilst the proper definition of moral distress continues to be the subject of debate, the belief that it occurs during end-of-life care has been a constant feature of discussions of the topic. In this talk, Georgina will discuss the research she has conducted exploring moral distress in nursing, and suggest that previous definitions of moral distress should be broadened so as to accommodate the experiences of moral distress she has uncovered during her work. Georgina will discuss how a different approach to ethics education may help to alleviate feelings of moral distress. She will also consider further ways to support clinicians providing end-of-life care, including those who experience moral distress in their professional lives. The discussion groups that follow her talk will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss the idea of moral distress, to reflect on their own experiences, and to consider how this issue can be further addressed as part of EoL care.

Professor Pierre Mallia (Malta): *The End of Life Experience in Malta: Culture, Care, and Ethics.*

Prof Mallia will speak about his experience of the challenges of providing care at the end of life in Malta, a European member state with a high degree of religious observance. He will also discuss *Endcare*, including what motivates the project and the work being done to develop the End of Life curriculum. He will also discuss his coordination of a consensus statement on End of Life Care, co-authored by the faculties of medicine, laws and theology at the University of Malta. Finally, he will discuss how he has approached the task of further embedding this work in Maltese Healthcare and Society more generally, including his engagement with the Maltese Ministry of Health and the parliamentary group on End of Life Care.

Dr Simon Woods (Newcastle): *Contemporary Palliative Care: Ethics and the 'Good Death' Revisited.*

In his talk, Dr Wood's will explore the extent to which we can make sense of the concept of the 'good death.' In particular he will focus on whether and how this idea can be articulated in the context of modern end of life care. The talk will be an

opportunity to reflect upon, clarify and challenge the values and goals of contemporary palliative care. He will touch on some of the most significant ethical issues that arise when providing care to patients who are nearing the end of their life. In the discussion groups that follow his talk there will be an opportunity to discuss these issues in more detail and for participants to offer their own reflection of their experiences of caring for patients at the end of their lives and of providing palliative care.

Dr Samantha Halliday (Leeds): Advance Decisions as a Mechanism to Extend Autonomy Past the Onset of Incapacity.

When a patient has capacity she has an absolute right to determine whether to consent to, or refuse, medical treatment, even life-sustaining treatment and treatment that would be likely to be regarded as in her best interests. However, the situation becomes much less clear where a patient wishes to exercise this same right to refuse treatment, but in anticipation of incapacity when she will no longer have the capacity to make a contemporaneous decision.

Although the courts have long recognised that it is possible to refuse treatment in advance of incapacity, both the Westminster Parliament and the Northern Ireland Assembly have enacted legislation giving statutory recognition to advance refusals of medical treatment - in England and Wales the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and in Northern Ireland the Mental Capacity Act (Northern Ireland) 2016. Whilst each Act could be considered a step in the right direction, in their current format they have each failed to achieve the aims of providing clarity and recognising the right to make anticipatory choices. Whilst providing statutory recognition of advance refusals, the NI Act side-steps the issue of advance decisions by defining them only by reference to the common law. By contrast, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 provides a more detailed statutory framework for advance decisions in England and Wales, recognising that an individual can make a valid and binding advance refusal of treatment, including life-sustaining treatment which will take effect in the specified situation if she later lacks the capacity to make a contemporaneous decision. However, in attempting to balance the protection of life against the right to self-determination the legislature has imposed stringent requirements upon the making of an advance decision intended to be binding, and granted a wide degree of discretion to the ultimate decision maker, the person charged with determining whether or not the directive is valid and applicable.

In this session we will discuss the statutory requirements and case law pertaining to advance decisions, considering to what extent it is possible to draft a binding advance decision and the impact of advance decisions upon health care professionals.

There will also be plenty of time for discussion & debate.

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Space is limited. Please email us at: contact@nief.org.uk

All Welcome