Confidentiality and Information Security in Nursing

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# Sharing information

Information to doctors and nurses is like studying for an exam. When you take an exam, you don’t just show up on the exam date ready to take the exam without preparation. Just like preparing for an exam, you and your team of doctors have to prepare for your patient. Diseases or disorders such as hemophilia, asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or sickle cell anemia require much more extensive care that can differ from patients that do not have these diseases. Sharing information provides safe, effective care, both for the individual and for the community; however, this information is confidential to the patient.

## Sharing information with consent1

While sharing information is vital to a patient, nurses also have to distinguish when consent is needed and when consent is not needed. All patients have a right to privacy and it is up to the nurse to maintain the privacy and confidentiality of that patient. Above all, there must be a clear and legitimate purpose for sharing the information concerning the patient. By this, I mean that it is not okay to inform extended family or irrelevant doctors of confidential information pertaining to the patient. Unless there are court orders, the nurse must make the decision of what information is shared, who it is shared with, and whether consent is needed. When obtaining consent, it is best to get consent in writing to avoid any future discrepancies. Consent can be given by a child if they are able to understand; otherwise, a parent or legal guardian has the ability to give consent. When getting consent, the nurse also had to remember the code of ethics. The parent or child needs to understand what information is being shared, why it is being shared, and who it is being shared with. (NSPCC, 2018)

### Sharing information without consent.

Information can be shared without consent when it is required by the law or if it benefits to a child. If you have legitimate reason to believe a child is being abused or neglected, you are required to report if to social services without consent. If the safety or welfare of a child is being threatened, it is also your responsibility to inform social services. When sharing information without consent, the nurse’s decision must be justified. It is important that the nurse does not inform the family that social services has been called, because it can hinder the safety of the child. In these circumstances, the nurse has the responsibility of standing up for the child and protecting the child from harm. (Council, 2018)

#### Communicating when sharing information.

Sharing information can be scary for nurses. When doing so, the nurse must determine if the information needs consent and whether the nurse is making the right decision. It is normal for a nurse to be nervous or worried; however, as nurses, we have to think of the patient as our own child and do everything we can to protect them. In a circumstance where a child needs surgery or medication, inform the parents of the procedure in knowledge that they are able to understand. Medical terminology can be confusing, especially at a time of crisis when a child is hurt or sick. Information should be shared effectively in order to remain confidential. As nurses, one way we can keep information confidential by speaking to parents face-to-face instead of on the phone. By doing so, it prevents information being shared to callers that claim to be parents in order to gain information. (Council, 2018)

##### **Conclusions**.

 Confidentiality and sharing information are both very important when it comes to patient care. In pediatrics, it is up to nurses to analyze the family of each patient to recognize signs of abuse and neglect. As nurses, we have to be the voice of the patient. We also have to be the translator for the doctor when it comes to sick children. It is up to nurses to calm the parents down during scary procedures or during cancer diagnosis of a four-year-old child. In these situations, the parents rely on nurses to help them understand what is going on and share information with doctors in order to assure safety of their child.

# References

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