

PATIENTS' RIGHTS

The basic principles of patients' rights are written in the Declaration on the Promotion of Patients' Rights in Europe, which was adopted by the World Health Organisation in 1994.

Patients' rights also constitute an important part of the Ljubljana Charter on Reforming Health Care, drafted at the 1996 Ljubljana Conference by the European Member States of the WHO.

CONSENT

Patient's consent is a prerequisite for any medical or nursing procedure.

The patient has the right to refuse or to stop any medical or nursing procedure. The patient must be fully informed about the possible consequences of refusing or stopping his or her treatment.

If the patient is unable to express his or her will and the medical or nursing procedure is considered urgent, the hospital shall proceed as if the consent had been given while considering all previous statements of the patient.

If the patient has a legal representative, his or her opinion shall be taken into consideration.

For storage and use of tissue samples, a written consent of the patient is required. If the body parts concerned are to be used for establishing diagnosis and treatment, the hospital shall proceed as if the consent had been given.

In health-care facilities hosting doctor trainings, a written patient's consent to participate in education process is necessary.

Written consent is also required for participating in scientific research. Patients who are unable to express their will (their legal representative may act on their behalf) shall not be included in research activities unless the research activity is beneficial to the patient. Patients unable to express their will may only be included in a research activity if the risk and effort concerning the patient are minimal, and the research results are of great value.

INFORMATION

All information on health services must be available to everyone.

The patient has the right to be fully informed about his or her medical condition, such as medical information on the condition, proposed medical procedures (including information on benefits and major risks), alternative treatments, consequences of refusing or stopping the treatment, diagnosis, prognosis, progress of treatment and nursing procedures.

In exceptional cases, some information may be concealed from the patient if it is likely to harm their condition and there are no apparent positive effects related to the disclosure of this information.

All information must be given to the patient in an understandable manner and in accordance with the patient's cognitive abilities. Technical terms should be avoided and – when necessary – a consultation can also be interpreter-mediated.

The patient has the right to be concealed certain information at his or her explicit request.

The patient has the right to choose the person to be given information on the patient's behalf.

The patient has the right to seek second opinion.

Upon admission to the hospital, the patient must be informed about the identity and the professional status of the medical staff that will take care of him or her, and about established procedures related to the patient's stay and care in the hospital.

The patient may request and be given a written summary of the diagnosis, treatment and care upon discharge from the hospital.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

All medical and personal information about the patient is confidential, including after the death of the patient.

Confidential information may only be disclosed with explicit consent from the patient.

All patient information shall be protected. All tissue samples and other substances that could be used to reveal information about the patient shall be protected.

The patient has the right to see and receive copies of his or her own medical information kept in medical records.

The hospital may only interfere with the private or family life of the patient if consent has been given and an intervention is necessary for establishing a diagnosis, treatment and care.

Any medical or nursing procedure can be performed only while respecting the patient's privacy. Any procedure shall be performed only in the presence of the persons needed at the procedure, unless consented or wished otherwise by the patient.

The patient has the right to spatial and auditory privacy.

TREATMENT AND CARE

If a special type of treatment is only available for a limited number of patients, the patients must be chosen without discrimination, basing solely on medical criteria.

The patient has the right to choose or change the doctor, medical staff and hospital if this is in accordance with the health-care system.

The patient has the right to an explanation before being transferred to another hospital or discharged.

The patient has the right to be treated with respect (related to cultural, religious and other values) during the whole process of diagnosis, treatment and care.

The patient has the right to receive support by his or her family, relatives, friends and religious representatives.

It is the hospital's duty to ease the patient's suffering to the extent possible regarding the patient's health condition.

Everyone has the right to receive the medical care needed (in accordance with the financial, human and material resources available).

The patient has the right to receive quality health care with a high degree of humanity and quality technical equipment.

The patient has the right to continuing care with the cooperation of all persons and institutions involved in the patient's treatment, diagnosis and care.

If necessary, appropriate service for further treatment and care shall be available to the patient after discharge.

The patient has the right to receive humane health care while dying and the right to a dignified death.

RIGHT OF COMPLAINT

If the patient believes that his or her rights have been violated, the patient has the right to file a complaint. The patient has the right to a thorough, effective and immediate review of the complaint and a response to the complaint.

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