

MyValues

THE UTILITY OF A PERSONAL VALUES REPORT FOR MEDICAL DECISION-MAKING.

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Abstract: Our aim was to determine if a patient's Personal Values Report (PVR) has a positive impact on a doctor's decisions regarding treatment. We conducted a prospective cohort study delivering a short, web-based hypothetical case-centred questionnaire to intensive care doctors practising in Australia and New Zealand.

One hundred and twenty-four intensive care consultants and registrars agreed to participate in an online questionnaire in two routine mailings between November 2013 and February 2014. We evaluated the effect of a PVR on clinical decision-making in a case-based scenario. In addition, participants rated the utility of the PVR on their decision-making process. Participants were presented with a difficult scenario in a frail elderly man where death was almost inevitable without aggressive support but survival with severe disability was possible with significant intervention.

Most doctors (52.4%) elected to continue ventilation and admit to ICU.

After the PVR was made available, only 8.1% of doctors continued to choose to admit the patient to the ICU. In all cases where admission to the ICU was chosen after seeing the PVR, the admission to the ICU was stated to be to permit family to arrive before withdrawing support (an approach which was consistent with the values stated in the PVR).

One hundred and twenty-one of the 124 participants (97.6%) agreed or strongly agreed that the PVR helped them get an understanding of the patient's wishes, whereas none of the participants (0%) were unsure, disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement. The remaining 2.4% did not answer the question. It is surmised that PVRs pre-written by patients are potentially an effective and valuable tool for use in helping doctors make decisions regarding patient care.
