International Conference on

EMERGENCY AND ACUTE CARE MEDICINE August 22-23, 2018 Tokyo, Japan

Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation practices in acute care for older adults: A qualitative study

Sofia Lokman Cavill Northwest London Hospital NHS Trust, UK

Background & Aim: Older adults are more likely to receive Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (DNACRP) orders when they are admitted to hospitals compared to younger patients, yet little is known of the impact these orders have on the everyday care of older patients. Aim is to understand staff perceptions on issues surrounding current DNACPR practices involving older adults in the acute setting and elicit the influences of DNACPR decisions on care for older adults.

Method: A qualitative approach was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 health professionals from multiple disciplines, working in geriatric medicine wards in a district general National Health Service (NHS) hospital in the United Kingdom (UK).

Result: All participants supported the use of DNACPR orders in older adults but agree on the unintended repercussions to care beyond what the order stipulates. Four key themes have been identified surrounding DNACPR practices in older adults including, complex decision-making, challenging discussions, staff's reflections of its impact on care and its benefits to geriatric medicine.

Conclusion: Hospital DNACPR practices in older adults can be variable with DNACPR decisions having unintended negative influences on care. Nevertheless, staff in geriatric medicine strongly supports its use in older adults which staff felt led to a more holistic care with discussions often used as platforms for conversations on wider aspects of care. Perhaps incorporating DNACPR decisions into formal care plans and increasing staff education on resuscitation policies may help standardize practices and remedy its negative influence on care.

Biography

Sofia Lokman Cavill has completed her Medical School training at Guy's Kings & St Thomas' School of Medicine, London where she achieved an honors in her MBBS degree. She has completed her Postgraduate studies at Kings College London where she obtained an MSc in Gerontology and Ageing. She also has completed her Post-Graduate Diploma (PGDip) in Clinical Dermatology from Queen Mary University London (QMUL). She is currently working as a Senior Specialist Registrar in Acute and General Internal Medicine with a special interest in frailty and geriatrics in the acute medical unit and is a Member of the Royal College of Physicians (MRCP, UK).

sofia.cavill@nhs.net

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