Shared decision making prior to emergency laparotomy: the perspectives of healthcare professionals, patients and their family

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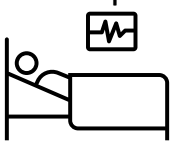
Abstract ID: 4922

Introduction

- Emergency laparotomy (EL) is associated with significant patient morbidity and mortality, with potential subsequent reduction in post-operative quality of life and loss of independence
- The decision to undergo an EL is therefore important



Aims & Objectives

To understand stakeholder perceptions of the decision making process in the context of EL

Methods

- Semi structured qualitative interviews were undertaken with
  - Relevant healthcare professionals
  - Patients who had undergone an EL
  - Family members involved in the decision making process prior to an EL.
- Interviews took place online or over the phone
- Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed
- Transcriptions underwent thematic analysis utilising principles of grounded theory
- Dual-analysis was undertaken on 10% of transcripts.

Results

Twenty-one interviews were completed.

- Six patients
- One family member
- Fourteen healthcare professionals (surgeons, geriatricians, anaesthetists, ICU)

Healthcare professional identified

- Unique context of emergency surgery impacting decision making
- Presence of variation in both decision making practice and patient involvement in the decision making process
- Different factors influence the decision to undergo EL.

Patients identified:

- Poor recollection of events
- Variation in patient involvement in the decision-making process
- Information delivery is key to patient involvement
- Patient emotions impact decision making ability.

Conclusions

Semi-structured interviews with different stakeholders have identified different themes that influence decision making prior to an emergency laparotomy.

Samuel Lawday is an NIHR Doctoral Research Fellow (NIHR303276). This study was supported by the National Institute for Healthand Care Research Bristol Biomedical Research Centre. The views expressed are those of the author(s) and not necessarily those of theNIHR or the Department of Health and Social Care.