Category 1: Ethical issues

A274 - Deficits of end-of-life care (eolc) perceptions among physicians in intensive care units managed by anesthesiologists in Germany

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Introduction:
In order to apprehend the structural aspects and current practice of end-of-life care (EOLC) in German intensive care units (ICUs) managed by anesthesiologists, a survey was conducted to explore implementation and relevance of these items.

Methods:
In November 2015, all members of the German Society of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine (DGAI) and the Association of German Anesthesiologists (BDA) were asked to participate in an online survey to rate 50 items. Answers were grouped into three categories: Category 1 reflecting high implementation rate and high relevance, category 2 low implementation and minor relevance, and category 3 low implementation and high relevance.

Results:
Five-hundred and forty-one anesthesiologists responded, representing just over 1/3 of anesthesiology departments running ICU’s. The survey revealed new insights into current practice, barriers, perceived importance, relevance, and deficits of EOLC decisions. Only four items reached ≥ 90% agreement as being frequently performed, and 29 items were rated “very” or “more important”. 28 items attributed to category 1, 6 to category 2, and 16 to category 3, representing a profound discrepancy between current practice and attributed importance. Items characterizing the most urgent need for improvement (category 3) referred to desirable quality of life, patient outcome data, preparation of health care directives and interdisciplinary discussion, advanced care planning, distinct aspects of changing goals of care, standard operating procedures, implementation of practical instructions, continuing EOLC education, and inclusion of nursing staff and families in the process.

Conclusion:
The survey generated awareness about deficits in EOLC matters in critical care. Consequently, already available EOLC tools have been made available through the website of the German Society of Anesthesiology and Intensive Care Medicine (DGAI): http://www.uk-intensivmedizin.de/arbeitsforen.html.