



ESCOLA DE ENFERMAGEM
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ETHICS IN PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

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ETHICAL ISSUES IN HEALTH CARE

- Depends on complexity level and characteristics of care
- Primary health care: more frequent encounters
less urgent conditions
- Patients: less dependent
they are at home
- Objectives of health care: long-term goals
- Ethical issues: subtle / unnoticed
everyday ethics

■ ETHICAL ISSUES

Inventory of ethical problems

Qualitative

Questionnaire: IPE-APS

40 ethical problems:
relationship patients, team
and healthcare system

ETHICS IN

PRIMARY

HEALTH

CARE

ETHICAL ISSUES

MORAL
DELIBERATION

MORAL DELIBERATION

- Critical, hermeneutical, qualitative research
- Integrated empirical ethics research (IEER)
Molewijk et al 2003,2004
- Deliberative Bioethics – Diego Gracia
- Integrative Empirical Ethics Research (IEER) based
on the deliberative bioethics

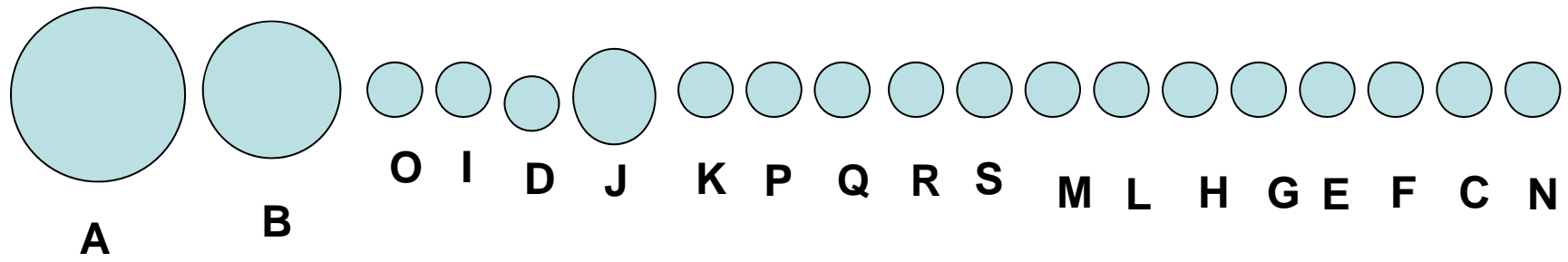
ASSISTING THE ADOLESCENTS

B is a 15 years old girl. She attends to a primary healthcare center and tells to the health team that recently she felt in love with a 16 years old boy. Her parents think she is very young and prohibited dating. The girl assures she does not have an active sex life, but asks for the prescription of an oral hormonal contraceptive. She also asks the team do not tell anything about this to her parents.

What would you recommend for the healthcare team?

Values in conflict: (1) privacy and confidentiality of adolescent (2) parents' responsibility for the health of their children

ASSISTING THE ADOLESCENTS



Prescribe and do not tell anything to parents

Prescribe and accomplish familiar relationship

Do not prescribe and tell to the parents

Motivation to the trend to the extreme course of prescribing:
- prevent adolescent's pregnancy – minimal harm

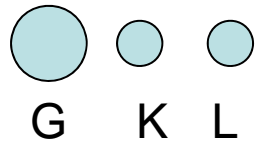
PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY

Mr. M has syphilis. He decided not to tell anything about his disease to his wife. But he wants to protect her from disease. While on treatment, he asks to healthcare team to take exams in his wife without informing her about his health condition.

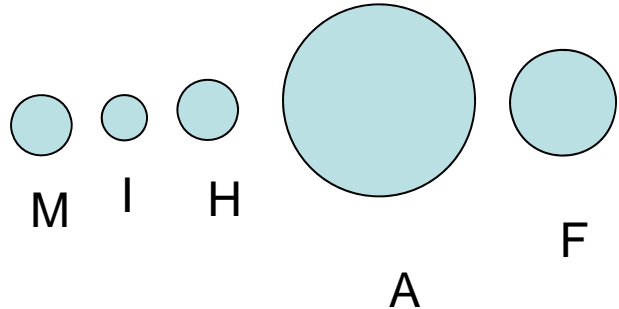
What would you recommend for the healthcare team?

Values in conflict: (1) respect for privacy and confidentiality in the clinical relationship with the husband (2) honesty and veracity in the clinical relationship with the wife.

PRESERVING CONFIDENTIALITY



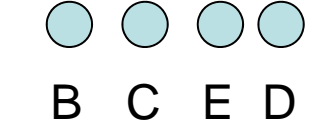
Test the wife for syphilis, after inform her about



Treat the husband, support him to tell the truth to his wife and test the wife only after he tells the truth



Do not test the wife; do not say anything to her and only treat the husband



Test the wife without inform anything to her

What can explain the trend to the middle courses of action?

-The experience with aids

CONCLUSIONS

- Primary health care: everyday ethics
- Many issues hardly are perceived as an ethical problem
- Require from professionals an acute moral sensibility
- Professionals decide differently depending on the characteristics of the case and their experiences
- Moral deliberation training could contribute to improve moral sensibility and practical wisdom in decision making

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