

Informed Consent - Role Play

Case 3 - DNR Discussion

Physician: Sam Tracy

Mrs. Rourk is an 88 year old nursing home resident with a complicated medical history including diabetes mellitus and congestive heart failure. She has been hospitalized in an acute care hospital because of pneumonia, which is being treated with antibiotics. As her attending doctor, you believe she is likely to experience a cardiac or pulmonary arrest. You believe that a DNR order should be placed in her chart, because you know that it is virtually certain that CPR will be unsuccessful in a patient of her age and condition. You arrange to meet with her daughter (son) Pat Rourk, to ask for consent for the DNR order since Mrs. Rourk is unable to make her own decision.

Family: Pat Rourk

Your mother has been sick for a long time, but now she seems really sick. Everyone in the family is pulling for her, and they are all counting on you to make decisions. Your mother is a person with a strong will to live and strong religious faith. You want to do what is right.

Note: an important part of this exercise is for the doctor to talk frankly with Pat about the alternatives available. Lay people often have very different perceptions about things like DNR.