

Consent: patients and doctors making decisions together


Meeting of the Cross-Party Group in the Scottish Parliament on Palliative Care

11 June 2008

General Medical Council
Regulating doctors
Ensuring good medical practice


Background to the new guidance

- *Seeking Patients' Consent: the Ethical Considerations* - published in 1998
- Developments in statute and common law over the past ten years
- Changes in attitudes of both doctors and patients
- Decision to produce revised guidance taken in 2006.



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Consultation



- Working group formed to develop proposal for new guidance
- Over 2000 organisations and individuals across the UK were invited to participate in written consultation
- Workshop events held with performance of a play to stimulate comment and debate of key issues.


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Consultation

- Worked with partner organisations to gain insight into the issues faced by patients, particularly those whose capacity is impaired
- Met representatives of UK government health departments
- Legal review to ensure consistent with framework for medical decision making in all four home countries.

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The guidance




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- Focuses on the importance of the doctor-patient partnership in decision making
- Reflects the shift in professional and public attitudes towards more patient-centred care
- Sets obtaining consent in the context of wider process of discussion and decision-making

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The guidance



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- Includes advice on
 - approaching discussions with patients about risk
 - what to do when patients do not want information about their condition or treatment options
 - making decisions when patients lack capacity, reflecting the Adults with Incapacity Act.

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Next Steps

- Raising awareness of the guidance
- Guidance on end of life issues
- Guidance on consent to research

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