

# Medical Retrieval, Futility and End of Life Care



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Retrieval medicine is the term used to indicate the use of an expert team to assess, stabilise and transport patients with severe injury or critical illness.

Shirley PJ, Hearn S. Retrieval medicine: a review and guide for UK practitioners. Part 1: clinical guidelines and evidence base. *Emerg Med J*. 2006 Dec;23(12):937-42

"Futile Care" - the continued provision of medical care or treatment to a patient where there is no reasonable hope of a cure or benefit.

The Australian Capital Territory Local Hospital Network Council

“Physicians have an obligation to relieve pain and suffering and to promote the dignity and autonomy of dying patients in their care. This includes providing effective palliative treatment even though it may foreseeably hasten death.”

American Medical Association Code of Medical Ethics

# End of Life Care

It's a subject that evokes a lot of emotions, ranging from one's own fear of dying -the most primal of instincts - to the guilt family members often feel during the dying process to fears of turning over control of this most personal of decisions to faceless bureaucrats.

# Patient A

Male in 70s

Known malignant disease with secondaries

Oncologist unavailable

Presents to small hospital while away from home

Symptomatic pericardial effusion

# Patient B

Female 70s

End stage respiratory disease

Acute exacerbation, on BiPAP, in small hospital ED.

Physician in regional center (100km) suggests not suitable for intubation / ventilation

# Patient C

Female 80s

Presents GCS 10, low glucose and temperature

Pneumonia

Admitted

36/24 later, “needs” intubation for sputum retention.



# Solutions

Patient focus

Family focus

Clinician focus

Communication

Between - ???

Information - ???

Prevention !!!!!