

Being a caring non-judgmental nurse when dealing with family of the brain dead patient.

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Background- Until a patient is diagnosed as brain dead, his family is desperate in seeking help, assistance and even a sliver of hope. Up until the diagnosis is final we are all searching for a cure. The family will go to the ends of the earth in their efforts for survival. Once the diagnosis is clear cut, the family is given time to digest this news. In instances when the family refuses to donate organs after being approached by the organ procurement team, it is difficult for the ICU treating team to continue to care for the patient and family.

Objective- the aim of this talk is to raise awareness of the challenges that nurses face when caring for the brain dead patient and family. This presentation will discuss the period of time before the diagnosis is finalized, care and team approach to family and patient. Subsequently, the period after diagnosis is reached and the challenges the same team face will be presented. Together we will cover the difficulties, challenges and cultural aspects of nursing in these situations.

Results- This talk will raise awareness of the feelings of nurses, how they cope with brain death patients, their families, the family acceptance or refusal to donate organs. By becoming aware of our feelings, and sometimes judgmental attitudes, we can identify and cope with these difficulties.