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“Wit”

In the movie, “Wit”, Vivian Bearing is a professor of 17th century English poetry, who is diagnosed with advanced metastatic Stage IV ovarian cancer. She agreed to the aggressive and experimental chemotherapy treatment offered by her medical team Dr. Harvey Kelekian and his fellow, Dr. Jason Posner, who happens to be her former student. In the film, Vivian Bearing reflects on her life as well as her work while suffering from various side effects of full dose chemotherapy treatment such as vomiting, nausea and hair loss. The movie depicts the interaction between the patient and the health care providers such as the medical team and the nurse. It shows the hard-hearted treatment of Dr. Kelekian and Dr. Posner, who just want to do their job to treat the patient and failed to provide patient-centered care by putting patient at risk by violating Vivian’s privacy and dignity as a human being. On the other hand, Susie Monahan, the nurse, plays a role of being the only one who truly cares and advocates for Vivian’s terminal condition.

In the film, it depicts the main issue in health care delivery system which is failure to protect patient’s right of privacy, and inability of health care providers to provide patient-centered care and maintain patient’s dignity as a human being. An example of the scene that shows an unacceptable behavior is when Dr. Posner is about to do a pelvic examination. He was about to start the examination without having female present in the examination room, and even left the room with Vivian exposed in the examination table with feet in the stirrup. He did not provide proper covering and forget to close the door immediately. Dr. Posner did not clearly and thoroughly explain to Vivian about the process of the examination. As a result, Vivian felt uncomfortable during the examination. He even used medical jargons when doing the medical history assessment that Vivian cannot understand. These scenes portray unprofessional behavior among health care providers who are just after to the result of their research and experimental treatment. They are after for their professional interest and clearly do not have the empathetic care.

As I continued watching the film, the only person who showed compassionate care to Vivian is Susie, who portrayed the role of the nurse. Susie showed the essential significance of being an advocate for the patient. She simply wanted to provide a patient-centered high-quality care to Vivian. Susie did a great job portraying her role being an advocate by voicing her opinion to Dr. Posner in decreasing the dose of the chemotherapy treatment due to patient’s reaction to the treatment. Another beautiful scene in the movie, is when Susie and Vivian shared a popsicle, while Susie took time to sit at the bedside and listen to Vivian’s concerns. This scene reflected how the nurse maintains privacy and patient’s dignity, and at the same time, provided compassionate care that showed true human interaction between the nurse and the patient.

The movie ended up with a powerful and moving scene. It is when Dr. Posner found out that Vivian has no pulse. He called for code blue without knowing Vivian’s wishes were do not resuscitate. He failed to check or to know the patient’s advance directive. Susie ran in the room to advocate for Vivian by ensuring that her wish will be respected and die with dignity. She courageously spoke up against the medical team and forcefully stopped the resuscitation.

“Wit” clearly depicts a critical message to the audience. It emphasized the importance of being able to provide patient-centered high-quality care without putting risk at patient’s well-being by disrespecting and violating their privacy as well as their dignity. Health care providers such as physicians and nurses are expected to maintain a patient’s dignity while providing skilled and holistic care. Providing holistic care defines as caring for the entire individual, not only focusing on patient’s physical health but also addresses emotional, spiritual and cultural needs.