Wit Analyses

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In the movie “Wit”, the main character, Vivian is diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer. She was told that her best option was to go through experimental cancer treatment. The film explores her journey throughout her treatment and exposes the inhumane treatment that some patients may endure while being cared for. The three main themes that this film analyzes was the miscommunications and disengagement between the patient and the healthcare professionals, and the ethical principle of beneficence.

Effective communication plays an important role throughout a patient’s healthcare experience. Healthcare professionals must be able to communicate clearly, while having compassion, especially during periods of intense stress. In the movie, we notice multiple breaches in communication and total disregard for the patient’s well-being. In the beginning, doctor Kelekian was unable to communicate with the patient effectively, he uses many medical terms and did not make sure the patient completely understood. As the movie progress, we notice multiple instances where the patient was not acknowledged and was overlooked. A female healthcare worker walks in her room and did not greet her. Vivian describes that she was not used to others not acknowledging her existence. Everyone was focused on doing their job that they did not pay her any mind. a final example was during the medical rounds, the doctors all spoke about her like she was not there. That made her feel inhuman and invisible. Vivian discusses that she was asked numerous times about “how she was feeling”, but nobody actually cares, it was just something they say. It is important that we acknowledge that good communication leads to individualized care that meets the patient's need and helps us to identify their unique challenges and concerns. This will allow us to properly address issues as they arise.

Health care professionals are obliged to uphold the principles of professionalism by honoring the interests and well-being of their patients. One of the ethical principles that were disregarded in the movie was beneficence. This ethical principle is based on healthcare professionals doing good and the right thing for the patients. In the movie, Vivian is being treated with an experimental treatment for cancer. Therefore, she is part of a research and the doctor wants to provide her with a full dose of treatment and examine her reaction. In one scene, Vivian arrived in the hospital barely able to stand while shaking and feverish. Her primary nurse Susie was very concerned and contacted the doctor. However, the research scholar Jason vaguely ask her how she was doing but did not listen to her. He quickly diagnosed her with fever and neutropenia and insensitively states it was a shake and bake. However, the Nurse Susie acknowledge her suffering and advocated that she should receive a lowered dose especially since her quality of life is not improving. However, Jason disagrees and stated “Lower the dose? No way. She’s tough. She can take it”. This clearly identifies that the nurse was advocating for the patient best interest, meanwhile, the doctor’s main goal was the knowledge gain at the cost of the patient’s well-being. Vivian realizes that the physicians are unable to provide her with the emotional support that she needs. Thus, that help her to form a bond with her primary nurse Susie. Susie is very compassionate and is not afraid to advocate for her patient's right. She helped Vivian deal with End of Life decisions and her feelings of fear, and self-doubt.

In the end, the movie portrayed a dichotomy, in which we have on one end, the doctors focusing only on the disease and developing a cure meanwhile the nurse Susie focuses on the patient and being compassionate and understanding of the difficult nature of the disease. This movie teaches us the miscommunication and breaches of contracts. As healthcare professionals, we need to have a middle ground. Medicine is not only about curing diseases it is also about understanding the needs of people. We should not strive to acquire knowledge and cure disease at the expense of someone else's demise.