

Ethics after Hours



Building Patient Trust in Health Care CMAJ podcast

Summary:¹

In this podcast Dr. Bigham and Dr. Omole focus on factors that can break down patient trust in health care, and different ways to build or re-build trust between patients and health care providers. The two hosts speak with Louis Lochhead about his experience as a caregiver for his wife, while she was in the ICU recovering from severe injury after a car crash. Lochhead describes how lack of compassionate communication left him feeling disconnected from his wife's care, despite being her substitute decision-maker while she was in coma.

In the second part of the podcast Dr. Omole and Dr. Bigham speak with Dr. Francois Lamontagne, ICU specialist, about different ways physicians and other health care providers can build trust with patients and families when talking to them about uncertainties in diagnosis and prognosis. Ways to build trust include regular family meetings, being honest and transparent about uncertainty in medicine, and respecting patient's and families' concerns.

Hosts: Dr. Blair Bigham and Dr. Mojola Omole

Duration: 38 min. 40 sec.

Released: March 11, 2024

Available: <https://www.cmaj.ca/transcript-231583>

You may also be interested in this article:

Lochhead, L. (2023). Trust after severe injury: A Caregiver's perspective. *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)*, 195 (49) E1729-E1730. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.230776>

Ethics Themes:

Trust

Communication

Doctor-patient relationship

Hope

Questions for discussion:

- Identify and discuss the various events/issues that led to a breakdown in Louis' trust in health care.
- Should the doctor have communicated some hope, even if he didn't believe there was much to hope for in terms of recovery for Louis' wife?
- Louis was told early on by the neurosurgeon that his wife would likely end up in a permanent vegetative state (PVS). What did you think of Louis' take on why the neurosurgeon didn't comment on the fact that Loraine (Louis' wife) woke up?
- Dr. Lamontagne emphasizes the importance of treating people with kindness. What is the link between kindness and building of trust in health care?
- Discuss different health care system restraints that may make it difficult for physicians' and other health care providers to build trust with patients.

¹ Summary adapted from podcast website summary. <https://www.cmaj.ca/transcript-231583>