

New guidance for doctors on end of life care

The General Medical Council has published new guidance on end of life care.

Treating patients towards the end of their life can be clinically complex and emotionally challenging, and often raises difficult ethical and legal questions. *Treatment and care towards the end of life: good practice in decision making* is new guidance to help doctors deal effectively with this aspect of medical practice.

This new guidance is consistent with current law and sets standards for good practice in a number of areas which are pivotal in ensuring that patients receive high quality treatment and care.

It is intended to give doctors increased confidence in working with patients, family members and others close to a patient who is approaching the end of their life. It offers new advice and greater clarity around areas including:

- advance care planning to meet patients wishes and preferences
- taking account of advance requests for, and refusals of treatment
- issues around withdrawing or not starting clinically assisted nutrition and hydration
- raising the possibility of organ and tissue donation
- decisions involving neonates and infants
- bereavement and other support for family and others close to a patient

The guidance is the result of a two year review which included extensive UK wide consultation with doctors, patients, carers, employers and others. *Treatment and care towards the end of life: good practice in decision making* is now available online.

For more information about this go to: www.gmc-uk.org/end_of_life_care