

## Promoting patients' rights at the end of life in a geriatric setting in France: The healthcare professionals' level of knowledge about surrogate decision-makers and advance directives

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**Objective:** To assess levels of knowledge about patients' rights, surrogate decision-makers, and advance directives among healthcare professionals at three hospitals in France.

**Design:** A multicenter, cross-sectional study.

**Setting and Subjects:** Acute care, post-acute care, and long-term care units in three geriatric hospitals in the Paris area (France). Between March and June 2015, all healthcare professionals in these units were invited to participate in the study.

**Methods:** The participants' level of knowledge was assessed via an 18-item self-questionnaire on surrogate decision-makers, advance directives, and end-of-life decision-making. Participants who correctly answered 14 or more of the 18 questions ( $\geq 75\%$ ) were considered to have met the primary endpoint. The characteristics associated with a good level of knowledge were assessed using logistic regression.

**Results:** Among the 301 healthcare professionals (median  $\pm$  standard deviation age:  $40.4 \pm 10.2$  years; women: 73.4%), only 15.0% (95% confidence interval (CI): [19.7-29.5]) correctly answered at least 75% of the questions on patients' rights. Respectively 24.6%; [19.7-29.5]), 37.5% [32.0-43.0]) and 36.5% [31.1-42.0]) had sufficient knowledge regarding "surrogate decision-maker", "advance directives" and "decision-making at the end of life". In a multivariable analysis, the only factor significantly associated with a good level of knowledge about end-of-life policy was employment in a university hospital, with a non-significant trend for status as a physician.

**Conclusions:** Our survey of staff working in geriatric care units highlighted the poor overall level of knowledge about healthcare surrogates and advance directives; the results suggest that additional training in these concepts is required.

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