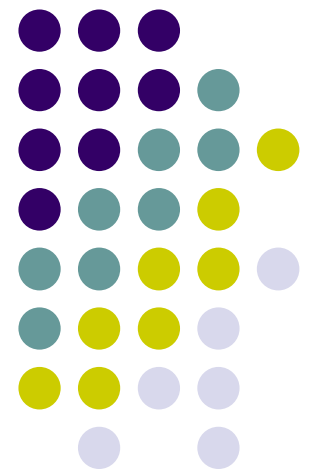
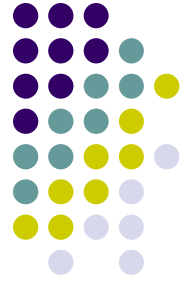


Bioethics Grand Rounds: Ethics and Medical Records

Elaine G. Chase, MS, LGSW
Clinical Social Worker
Case Presentation
February 2, 2005



Social Work's Role at the NIH



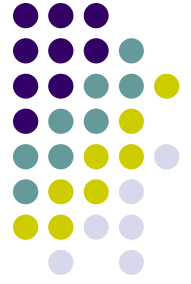
- Screen all patients to identify those in need of social work services.
- Provide support services to patients & families in need to help restore, maintain and improve health, consistent with research.
- Provide continuity of care to support compliance with research protocols.

The Patient



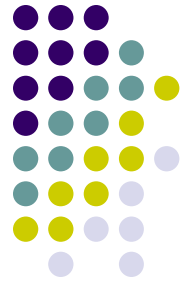
- Patient is a 37 year old single white male who lives with his parents.
- Based on complaint of insomnia, the patient is admitted to the inpatient unit for a sleep study.

Initial Nursing Assessment



- Upon admission, the patient reports symptoms of depression.
- The patient also reports to the nurse that he is not currently employed and has no health insurance.

Initial Social Work Screening



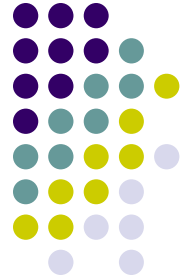
- The initial risk screening suggests that the patient is possibly in need of support and referrals due to depressive symptoms, lack of income and health insurance.
- Formal social work assessment scheduled.

Social Work Assessment



- Pt. presented with a flat affect; reported strained relationship with his parents and siblings.
- Unemployed for 1 year, living on savings & parental support. Attended some college, did not receive degree. Reported concern over lack of insurance.
- Had difficulty sleeping for past 15 years, difficulty focusing, finding little joy in activities.
- Reported abuse of recreational drugs & alcohol; quit one year ago, never addicted.

Documentation in MIS



HISTORY OF MENTAL ILLNESS/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

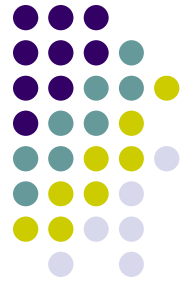
PT REPORTS ABUSED DRUGS AND ALCOHOL IN PAST, REPORTS NEVER BECAME ADDICTED. STOPPED ABUSING DRUGS 1 YEAR AGO. PT REPORTS HAVING SUICIDAL IDEATION AT SEVERAL POINTS IN PAST, NOT CURRENTLY.

Documentation in MIS



IMPRESSION/SUMMARY

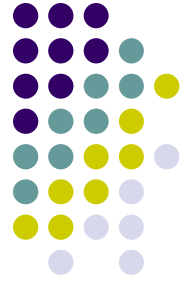
PT IS 37 Y.O. MAN SUFFERING FROM INSOMNIA WITH SEVERE DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS. PT INTERESTED IN TREATMENT OPTIONS, OPEN TO IDEA OF OBTAINING MEDICATION AND COUNSELING TREATMENT FOR DEPRESSION. PT FEELS POSITIVE ABOUT EXPERIENCE AT NIH.



Social Work Plan

- Based on the assessment, a plan was developed to assist the patient with information about treatment for depression & referral to mental health clinic.
- Provide information about eligibility for Medicaid or SSD.
- Arranged to meet the following day.

The Following Day



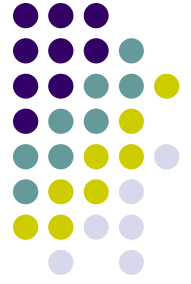
- Patient asked if the previous day's assessment was in his medical record in a computerized system.
- He expressed concern that someone (“computer hackers”) might illegally obtain access to that document and use it to deny him insurance.

Request



- He asked if I could remove the report from his computerized record.
- The assessment had printed out in his physical chart, yet it was technically possible to delete an entry from the MIS system

The Ethical Issues



- Should the social worker delete the assessment at his request?
- Should the social worker delete a portion of the assessment; the aspects the patient finds most worrisome?