

Analyzing the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Clinicians' Perceptions of Resuscitation and Escalation Decision-Making Processes: Cross-Sectional Survey of Hospital Clinicians in the United Kingdom

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Abstract : Introduction Staff redeployment, increased numbers of acutely unwell patients requiring resuscitation decision-making conversations, visiting restrictions, and varying guidance regarding resuscitation for patients with COVID-19 disrupted clinicians' management of resuscitation and escalation decision-making processes. While it was generally accepted that the COVID-19 pandemic disturbed numerous aspects of the Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment (ReSPECT) process in the United Kingdom, a process which establishes a patient's CPR status and treatment escalation plans, the impact of the pandemic on clinicians' attitudes towards these resuscitation and decision-making conversations was unknown. This was the first study to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on clinicians' knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards the ReSPECT process. Methods A cross-sectional survey of clinicians at one acute teaching hospital in the UK was conducted. A questionnaire with a defined five-point Likert scale was distributed and clinicians were asked to recall their pre-pandemic views on ReSPECT and report their current views at the time of survey distribution (May 2020, end of the first COVID-19 wave in the UK). Responses were received from 171 clinicians, and self-reported views before and during the pandemic were compared. Results Clinicians reported they found managing ReSPECT conversations more challenging during the pandemic, especially when conducted over the telephone with relatives, and they experienced an increase in negative emotions before, during, and after conducting ReSPECT conversations. Our findings identified that due to the pandemic there was now a need for clinicians to receive training and support in conducting resuscitation and escalation decision-making conversations over the telephone with relatives and managing these processes.

Keywords : cardiopulmonary resuscitation, COVID-19 pandemic, DNACPR discussion, education, recommended summary plan for emergency care and treatment, resuscitation order

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