Discussion: Ethical and legal implications of prescribing drugs

Name

Date

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The prescription of drugs is dependent on the condition that the person is suffering from. In this case, the medical practitioner has made a mistake when administering drugs. According to the nursing code of ethics, nurses owe the same duty of care as they do to the patients. In this case, this duty of care is violated when the nurse administers the wrong medication (Arcangelo, Peterson, Wilbur, & Reinhold, 2017). From an ethics perspective the nurse is expected to alleviate the suffering of the patient by providing him or her with the right quality of care rather than harming them. According to the ethics of duty, the nurse has acted unethically, resulting in harm of the patient. The nurse has failed to promote the right and the safety of the patient as required under the nursing code of ethics.

From a legal perspective the nurse has been negligent in the administration of drugs by administering doses meant for adults to a child. Negligence is punishable under the law. The patient should be provided with the drug as per the prescriptions (Arcangelo, Peterson, Wilbur, & Reinhold, 2017). Drugs that are not right for the condition or which are not meant for the specific age of the patient should not be administered otherwise the nurse is held liable for absconding their duty of care and professional excellence towards the patient ins service delivery.

There are well established approaches to addressing the above scenario. According to the American nurse ethics code, the nurses should protect the safety of the patient (American Nurses Association, 2019). This implies that they should be diligent in administering of the drugs. Equally, under the nursing code, the nurses are also expected to exercise professionalism and expertise when dealing with the patients. It is thus important that the nurse ensures that the drugs are prescribed by a qualified doctor, prescribed by a qualified pharmacist and administered to the patient as required. The safety of the patient will be enhanced.

In order to limit the instances of poor administration of drugs, the nurses should collaborate with patients and their family members. Patient centered care requires that the nurse gathers all of the relevant information before delivering care. This process increases their understanding of the conditions and the patient history thus increasing chances of proper administration of care to patients. Proper understanding of the abbreviations used in prescription drugs is also important among nurses. It will ensure that the right drugs are administered for the right individuals and the right conditions. Error prone abbreviations of drugs should be counter checked tor avoided to avoid confusion of the nurses by the writings of the prescribers (Arcangelo, Peterson, Wilbur, & Reinhold, 2017). The health care providers issuing the drug owe a duty of care under the law to provide the patient with the right drug. In order to avoid confusion during drug administration, proper labeling is important. This would limit chances of confusing these drugs among the prescribers and the nurses

Preparedness and having professional competency is a key step that will limit unethical and illegal treatment of patients or wrongful administration of drugs. Skills should be shared between those issuing the prescriptions and the nurses, ensuring that no confusion in administration of such drugs has occurred. It is also important to train patients and family members on how to administer drugs in the right doses and type. While the prescriptions may be right, confusion among the patients may also result in risky drug administration. Focusing on the best interest of the patient and using evidence based practice and prescription will limit chances of legal and ethical lapse in nursing practice

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