

TOK Presentation Planning

Notes on BBC documentary- Real-life situations

Professor Martin Elliot: Cardio-thoracic surgeon in

Mohamed-

- 4 months old
- ribs do not grow but the body continues to grow
- ethics committee have approved the surgery if the parents agree to it
- the surgery has only been conducted a hand full of times
- the surgery is completed with his rib cage expanded but there are no signs of growth in the lungs over a few months and breathing has become more difficult
- doctors say that he has reached the end of the road in terms of what can be done to improve his health.
- doctors proposed that he be taken off life support
- parents must consider the option, they are informed that the doctors believe that he will die soon after life support is terminated.
- Emotion of the surgeon plays a role and the parents concerns
- information can help guide decision making

Shauna-

Information from article plus the BBC documentary

- 15 years old
- has very narrow trachea
- only one lung causing a shift in the veins to be on one side of the body, this makes the operation very difficult.
- and has had heart attacks and several operations
- waited 4 months for her trachea and now the surgery is scheduled
- ethics committee discussed it before waiting the 4 months
- took 4 hours to remove the old trachea, they found it a miracle that she was still breathing when they looked at it
- two weeks after the successful surgery she experienced a cardiac arrest in Leeds hospital and died three days later.
- doctor does not regret performing the surgery because they knew from her past that she had reached the end of conventional therapy
- if you don't try than you can make no progress
- we can learn from every operation the more you do the better findings and outcome you get

What is Pioneering surgery:

- It can also be referred to as experimental surgery
- This surgery can benefit scientific research. It involves working towards developing new methods of treatment.
- Have to consider the risks involved with experimental surgery
- It is surgery that has only been performed a handful of times although research and results have been investigated.
- Pioneering surgery is a last result when conventional surgery can not help the patient any further.
- The following quote helps explain the general idea of pioneering surgery.
- “For medicine to advance, doctors must experiment, yet they must also constantly question how far they should push the the hospital's cardio-thoracic team, and who faces these formidable life and death issues every working day. And it doesn't get any easier.” -Kathryn Knight (Radio Times)

Knowledge issue:

To what extent is it ethically correct to conduct pioneering surgery on children?

Claim:

It is ethically correct to conduct pioneering surgery on children:

- There are scientific benefits to conducting surgery for rare conditions
- Medical care should always be improving and changing
- Doctors have a duty to treat the patient when all hope is lost and conventional treatments have failed to cure the patient's condition
- Shauna's opinion: she says that she wants to improve her quality of life and tells doctors that she wants to be able to take the bus with the other kids because in her current state she cannot.
- Even though both of these children passed away, Shauna's death was due to a heart attack but her trachea was making spectacular progress and this was the most doctors could do to improve her life.
- Mohamed had a very slim chance of improving even before the surgery and the surgery was something that the parents needed to agree to to allow him the opportunity to continue to grow with the hope of him coming off of life support.

• Dr. Martin Elliot: Head cardio-thoracic surgeon at GOSH

Duty Ethics- that everyone has a duty to do what is right

- Doctor has the duty to try to cure patient
- Best judgment for the patient
- This is when experimental surgery comes in

Immanuel Kant- The importance of motives

- Moral value of an action is determined by the motive for which it is done rather than the consequences
- Doctors motives are to do good-with an unexpected outcome
- Our actions should be motivated by reason rather than feeling

- We have certain duties no matter what we feel
- The doctors have to show consistency (pros and cons of surgery) in the decisions they make and the successes they have

Reasoning- How do we define best judgement?

- “The fact is, that there is never a decision in ethics, there’s no right or wrong. It’s best judgment.” – Elliot

Professor Elliot reasons that we do

- The ethics committee at GOSH must be consulted before offering surgery to the parents. This committee is very important as they discuss all of the pros and cons of the possible surgery and take into consideration the parents and doctors opinions.
- “the committee found no ethical objections to Shauna’s surgery” -BBC Series 2 Episode 6
- What they must consider:
 - Has conventional surgery been pushed to it’s extent?
 - Will it help to develop medical treatment even further?
 - Data and information is taken into account.

Counter Claim:

It is not ethically correct to conduct pioneering surgery on children.

- Risks are high for outcome of surgery
- The life expectancy may not potentially increase with this surgery, lessen the quality of life
- If the surgery is unsuccessful then the average successes will decrease causing no further development with the treatment.
- humans are being used for scientific experiments/ sacrificed for science not ethically correct.
- Shauna and Mohamed’s Deaths, some could argue that it was a bad decision to do these surgeries because it shortened their overall lives and decreased the quality of life for Mohamed because he was put on life support and wasn’t able to be taken off.

Self-Interest Theory:

- The theory that humans only do things to please themselves.
- Doctors at GOSH
 - Could be argued that they only want to do this to improve their medical ability or to improve the hospitals reputation
- Risking human lives for science, as “scientific experiments”
- doctors are doing all that they can do because they get paid to do the surgeries

Conclusion:

- Never a decision in ethics
- "We know they had reached the end of conventional therapy, so in that sense, I do not regret trying" -Elliot
- I agree with Elliot...
 - "When it comes to innovative procedures, every patient who survives is standing on the shoulders of those who didn't and every operation we undertake learns from the experience of the previous one," says Elliott.
 - Every patient who survives is there because of others who didn't
 - Operations undertaken allow us to learn from the previous one
- the unfortunate deaths were a result of the condition of the child not the specific surgery in these cases
- Mohamed's surgery had to be done while he was young to benefit his future life, his diagnosis has been treated before and can improve life expectancy so in this case it was unfortunate that it did not allow him to improve.
- Shauna's surgery was more rare so it was taking a risk. The surgery was successful but it was her other conditions which caused her death.
- despite the dangers of pioneering surgery and human greed, the doctors consider and conduct pioneering surgery for the right reasons and to develop medicine
- this development also increases our faith in medical care because we rely on it as a society.
- The positive factors of experimental surgery weigh out the negative factors.

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Ethics of Pioneering Surgery at Great Ormond Street Hospital

What is Pioneering Surgery?

- Experimental surgery
- Benefit scientific research- working towards developing new methods of treatment
- Risks involved
- Surgery that has only been performed a handful of times
- Conventional surgery can not help the patient any further
- “For medicine to advance, doctors must experiment, yet they must also constantly question how far they should push the the hospital's cardio-thoracic team, and who faces these formidable life and death issues every working day. And it doesn't get any easier.” -Kathryn Knight (Radio Times)

Previous Patients at GOSH

Shauna

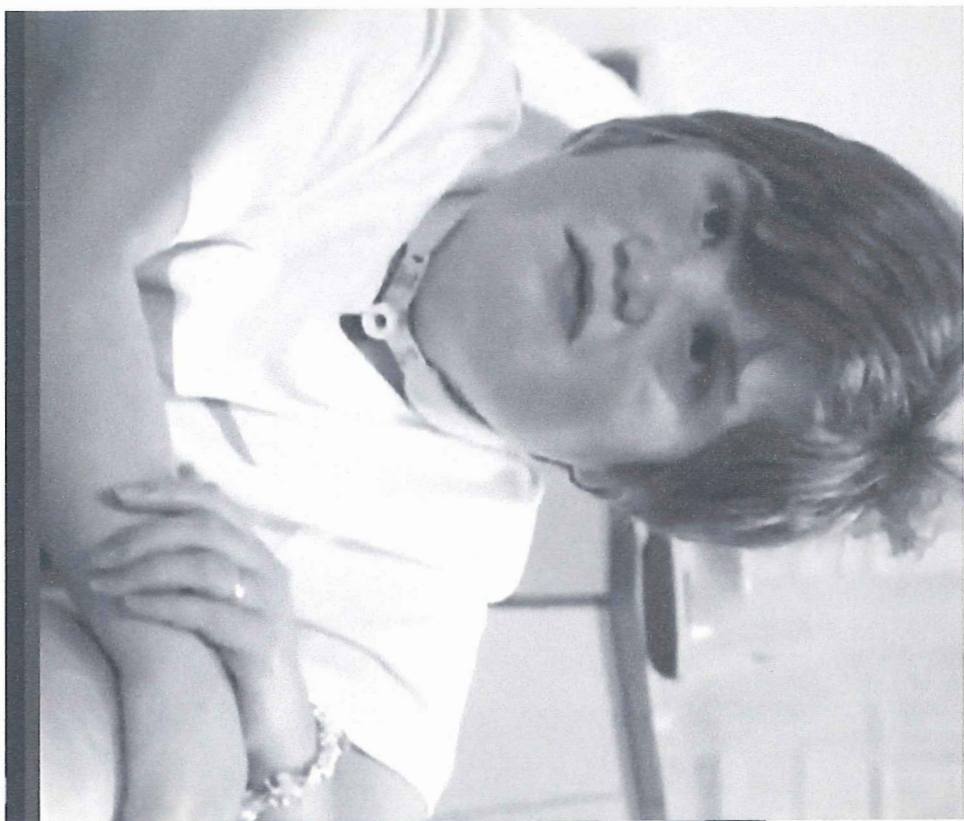
- 15 years old
- Narrow trachea
- Transplant for new trachea grown specially for her

Mohamed

- 4 months old
- Jeune Syndrome – ribcage
- Must be expanded

Both of these cases

- Children
- Undergo experimental surgery
- Pass away after their surgeries
- No more conventional surgery
- Parents must decide whether they want to take the doctors advice on the surgery



Knowledge Issue

To what extent is it ethically correct to conduct pioneering surgery on children?

Why doctors should conduct pioneering surgery...

- There are scientific benefits to conducting surgery for rare conditions
- Medical care should always be improving and changing
- Doctors have a duty to treat the patient when all hope is lost and conventional treatments have failed to cure
- Shauna's opinion

Dr. Martin Elliot: Head cardio-thoracic surgeon at GOSH

- **Duty Ethics**
 - Doctor has the duty to try to cure patient
 - Best judgment for the patient
 - This is when experimental surgery comes in
- **Immanuel Kant- The importance of motives**
 - Moral value of an action is determined by the motive for which it is done rather than the consequences
 - Doctors motives are to do good-with an unexpected outcome
 - Our actions should be motivated by reason rather than feeling
 - We have certain duties no matter what we feel
 - Consistency in results

Reasoning- how do we define best judgment?

“The fact is, that there is never a decision in ethics, there’s no right or wrong. It’s best judgment.” – Elliot

- The ethics committee at GOSH must be consulted before offering surgery to the parents

What to consider:

- Has conventional surgery been pushed to it’s extent?
- Will it help to develop medical treatment even further?
- Data and information is taken into account.

Why doctors shouldn't conduct pioneering surgery...

- Risks are high for outcome of surgery
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Self-interest Theory

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- Risking human lives for science, as “scientific experiments”
- Shauna and Mohamed’s Deaths

Conclusion

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- I agree with Elliot
 - Every patient who survives is there because of others who didn't
 - Operations undertaken allow us to learn from the previous one
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