16. MEDICAL RECORDS OF MINORS: THE DETERMINANT ROLE OF PARENTS AND LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES IN GUARANTEEING THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD

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Introduction. The medical act in the case of minor patients represents a set of norms and actions, in which both legal and ethical aspects, as well as emotional considerations, are involved. Parents and legal representatives are the ones who express consent on behalf of the patient regarding the procedure and the entire spectrum of treatment. In general, minors are not allowed to make informed medical decisions, having a limited capacity to fully understand the risks, implications and consequences of treatment.

Aim of study. The study aims to highlight the essential role of parents or legal representatives in the medical decision-making process for minors, analyzing the correlation between the protection offered by the adult and the child's right to be involved in the decision.

Methods and materials. The research was based on randomized theoretical and applied studies, analyzing specialized literature stored in international databases such as PubMed, Scopus, etc. The obtained data were statistically analyzed using the SPSS program, and the qualitative information was subjected to thematic analysis in order to highlight the main ethical ambiguities and communication difficulties encountered in practice.

Results. The study showed that more than half of the minors surveyed were not consulted when decisions regarding their health were made. Some had a clear understanding of the medical decision-making process. Most parents considered it necessary to make decisions for their children, arguing that minors do not fully understand the risks, benefits and possible complications of medical interventions. At the same time, few physicians reported situations in which the minor refused treatment,even if the parent had given consent. This aspect highlights the ethical tension between respecting the autonomy of the developing adolescent and the legal authority of the parent. Minors aged between 16 and 18 refused treatment due to the lack of medical education, highlighting the difficulties and conflicts that may arise in the decision- making process.

Conclusions. Parents or legal representatives have an essential role in making medical decisions for minors, constantly acting in the best interest of the child. They analyze the information provided by the medical staff, correlating it with family values and the particularities of the child. From a bioethical perspective,the decision-making process must reflect a balance between medical benefits and respect for the developing autonomy of the minor.

Keywords. ethics,medicine,minor,parent,autonomy,informed consent.

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