Communication Challenges in Children’s Palliative Care

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Background
Identification of communication challenges through the implementation of Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle.

Case Presentation
Baby N was born with an unidentified syndrome, resulting in severe developmental delay and physical symptoms. He was referred to Community Palliative Care 4 weeks prior to his death. Baby N was 22 months and his mum was 34 weeks pregnant with his first sibling at time of referral.

Management
Good symptom control – Parental involvement – Outlining of goals of care – Inter team collaboration – Team debrief post his death

Learning
• Decision making to be inclusive of parents but not over burdensome.
• Team communication to be structured and regular.
• Communication challenging both emotionally and logistically.
• Professionals own comfort with discussion regarding dying.

Conclusion
• Information must be honest and comprehensive.
• Importance of reflection and learning.
• Nurture inter team communication.
• Open communication will create a dynamic and committed team.

References available upon request at: jmccarthy@marymount.ie