

**Paramedic perceptions about ethically good care for older persons with acute health problems**

QUT Ethics Approval Number 2000001006

**Research team**

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**Why is the study being conducted?**

The purpose of this project is to investigate paramedics' perceptions about ethical problems related to the patient's self-determination when the patient has reduced decision-making capacity. The research is being carried out in order to create a knowledge base for an educational intervention with the aim of promoting the ethical competence of paramedics.

You are invited to participate in this research project because you are a Registered Paramedic and a member or fellow of the Australasian College of Paramedicine.

### What does participation involve?

Your participation will involve completing three to four questionnaires. These will be distributed via email every couple of weeks. The questionnaires will include a Likert scale response (i.e. 1 totally disagree through to 5 totally agree). The first questionnaire may take approximately 45 – 60 minutes to complete. You are asked to respond to the surveys and to submit your answers electronically.

Example questions are as follows:

	1 Totally Disagree	2	3	4	5 Totally Agree
1. Respecting an older patient's self-determination is about making a decision together with the patient?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. During a conversation with the patient I assess their capacity for self-determination?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. If a patient's self-determination has serious consequences for the patient (e.g. death), I do not want to assume responsibility?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Sometimes my colleague and I manipulate a patient in order to get him/her to do what we want?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary. If you agree to participate you do not have to complete any question(s) you are uncomfortable answering. Your decision to participate or not participate will in no way impact upon your current or future relationship with QUT or the Australasian College of Paramedicine. If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from the research project without comment or penalty. However, once a questionnaire has been completed submitted, it will not be possible to withdraw previously submitted data as it is not identifiable.

### What are the possible benefits for me if I take part?

It is expected that this research project will not benefit you directly. However, experience shows that many people appreciate being able to contribute to research and thereby being given the opportunity to influence care. Through the current study you will contribute to the knowledge base for a planned educational intervention.

You can request a brief summary of the outcomes of the study by contacting Dr Scott Devenish on [scott.devenish@qut.edu.au](mailto:scott.devenish@qut.edu.au)

### What are the possible risks for me if I take part?

There are no risks beyond normal day-to-day activities related with caring for the elderly people as a paramedic associated with your participation in this research project.

Recollection of cases involving caring for elderly patients with a reduced capacity for decision making may be an associated risk, however this is a regular part of paramedic work. Inconvenience due to the

time taken to participate in the study is a possible risk. It is not anticipated that any discomfort will be experienced when responding to the surveys.

If you do agree to participate you can withdraw from participation in the research project without comment or penalty, however after responding to a survey, the data cannot be identified, and participants are unable to withdraw their previous involvement in the study but may wish to discontinue any further participation.

### **What about privacy and confidentiality?**

All comments and responses are anonymous i.e. it will not be possible to identify your responses at any stage of the research, because personal identifying information is not linked in any way to the responses.

Any data collected as part of this research project will be stored securely as per QUT's Management of research data policy. Data will be stored for a minimum of 5 years, and can be disclosed if it is to protect you or others from harm, if specifically required by law, or if a regulatory or monitoring body such as the ethics committee requests it.

This research has no external funding.

### **How do I give my consent to participate?**

While the completion of the online anonymous questionnaire is usually taken as implied consent to participate in this study, because several rounds of questionnaires/data collection are required in this study, participants will be required to complete a consent form, and the first component of the questionnaires will consist of the 'participant information sheet' with an associated question asking your consent as to whether you wish to take part in the study or not. Your email will be used as a code to keep track of the questionnaire completion, however no identifiable information can be linked to data which is anonymous, and email addresses are to be kept confidential, known only to the research team.

### **What if I have questions about the research project?**

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact:

**Dr Scott Devenish**                      [scott.devenish@qut.edu.au](mailto:scott.devenish@qut.edu.au)    +61 7 31383581

### **What if I have a concern or complaint regarding the conduct of the research project?**

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. If you wish to discuss the study with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, you may contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team on +61 7 3138 5123 or email [humanethics@qut.edu.au](mailto:humanethics@qut.edu.au).

**Thank you for helping with this research project. Please print this sheet for your information.**