

Case study

Care Quality Commission: Use of Do Not Attempt Resuscitation notices

The Care Quality Commission regularly finds and acts on poor practice in relation to the use of Do Not Attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) Notices. On a specialist dementia ward, inspectors found that, while there was a good procedure around the issue of consent, when it came to use of DNAR notices evidence was lacking that this procedure was being followed consistently. There was little evidence that patients had been consulted about their wishes and in some cases decisions about use of DNAR notices had been taken on the basis of the age and fragility of the patient.

This raises serious issues under Article 2 of the ECHR (the right to life) and also Article 14 (the right not to be discriminated against in the enjoyment of human rights). The inspector took compliance action as a result of the practice on this ward and changes were initiated to ensure future appropriate use of DNAR notices.