

116 RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION ON END-OF-LIFE DECISIONS IN INTENSIVE CARE UNITS

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Objective End of life is frequently enforced in intensive care units in several countries. Recent surveys have shown that medical practices for end of life vary between countries among health care professionals. Religious affiliation has been included among other factors such as culture, attitudes of health care professionals, legislation, illness, quality of life and others. The determination and the affiliation of religion in end of life decisions in intensive care units is the objective of this review study. In addition in this review we are presenting the conventions and opinions of major religions regarding end of life care and decisions in intensive care units.

Design For this review CINAHL, Pubmed and Medline were searched under the keywords 'religion', 'end of life' and 'intensive care units'.

Results There are several different opinions among health care professionals in the issue of religion which influence end of life decisions in intensive care units. Health care professionals must understand patients' and families' religion and culture in order to provide better end of life care in patients. Furthermore, understanding religious affiliation will enhance communication among health care professionals with patients and families. Religious affiliation may support the development of guidelines for end of life practices.