

A tool to learn competencies in neonatal ethics: The portfolio

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Portfolios can support medical trainees' learning. There is no literature on portfolio use in neonatal ethics teaching. Our goal is to describe the content of our antenatal consultation portfolio and to present some of the trainees' observations.

In 2009, we implemented 2 one-on-one mentorship sessions where a neonatologist and the trainee review the portfolios. Our portfolio, used before and after a consult, supports the trainee to self-reflect on his own observations and performance, to remember the key elements of an informed consent, to summarize the final decision and to improve conflict-resolution skills.

Twelve consultation portfolios (mean gestational age 25.7 weeks [standard deviation (SD) 1.9 weeks]) were completed. In terms of overall performance, trainees rated themselves as 3.3 (SD 0.5) out of 5. Sharing information about the consequences of prematurity was the most commonly identified strength. Developing a good relationship with the parents was identified as the main skill to improve. Mortality and long-term handicap risks were uniformly disclosed. Full resuscitation maneuvers were discussed in all encounters involving mothers at 23 to 25 weeks' gestational age ($n = 8$); palliation was discussed in 62.5%. Parents' understanding was assessed in more than 90% of experiences, but in 33%, trainees were unable to assess the mother's decision-making capability. A definitive care plan was made in 58.3%.

Trainees reported that the one-on-one portfolio mentoring was essential to improving their consultations skills. The portfolio is a useful tool to help identify gaps in the trainees' competencies during antenatal consultations. The complementary one-on-one mentoring allows them to learn more about communication and ethical principles.