

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation: An ethical concern or a matter of clinical judgment[☆]



Reanimación cardiopulmonar: cuestión de ética o inadecuado juicio clínico

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) refers to the set of procedures aimed at restoring spontaneous circulation in reversible cardiac arrest (CA) patients. There is a big difference between assisting a cardiac arrest in an end-stage disease patient where the cardiac arrest is an expected outcome resulting from the irrevocable evolution of a distressing disease, and assisting an unexpected sudden cardiac arrest in a patient admitted with a recoverable condition.

Initially the CPR was administered at the OR with encouraging success rates due to the unmatched conditions present, including a witnessed cardiac arrest and the fact that most of the patients undergoing surgery were recoverable. This situation gave rise to a misinterpretation of the CPR procedure and people thought that every cardiac arrest patient should be resuscitated, regardless of the CA cause. Hence, CPR has been administered to irrecoverable patients. So the big question is: Are the low success rates¹ described due to inadequate patient selection for CPR? Keep in mind that dying at a hospital does not necessarily entail administering a CPR procedure for a dignified death.

Consequently, critical clinical judgment and good communication with the family are invaluable assets in the evaluation and rational medical decision-making.

Conflicts of interest

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Yessenia Katherin Arbayza-Avalos^a,
Niler Manuel Segura-Plasencia^{b,*}

^a Anesthetist MD. III Chimbote EsSalud Hospital, International Training Center of the American Heart Association, Antenor Orrego Private University, Trujillo, Peru

^b Internist MD. Belén Hospital, Trujillo, Professor Antenor Orrego Private University. International Training Center of the American Heart Association at the Antenor Orrego Private University, Trujillo, Peru

* Corresponding author at: Isidro Bonifaz, 801 Trujillo, Peru. E-mail address: nsegurap1@upao.edu.pe (N.M. Segura-Plasencia).

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