DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER GENETIC TESTING

Background to CMA Policy

Direct-to-consumer genetic testing (DTC) is a phenomenon that is occurring worldwide. In Canada, DTC services are available through several private companies and hospitals. The CMA has been following these developments closely and has been actively engaged in discussions with government, industry, and other stakeholders to address the ethical and professional implications of DTC.

Rationale

1. The rapid advancement of genomics has led to the development of DTC services, which allow individuals to obtain genetic information directly without the involvement of a healthcare professional. This has raised concerns about the potential for misuse of genetic information and the lack of medical follow-up.

2. DTC services often provide genetic testing without adequate medical oversight, which can lead to misinterpretation of results and potential harm to the individual.

3. The CMA is concerned about the potential for DTC services to undermine the professional judgment of healthcare providers and the importance of patient confidentiality and privacy.

4. The CMA supports the need for a regulatory framework to ensure the integrity and accuracy of DTC services and to protect the public's health and safety.

5. The CMA recommends that healthcare providers be informed about DTC services and their potential impact on patient care and the need for appropriate medical follow-up.

Documents

Federal Monitoring and Reporting Regime for MAID

CMA Policybase - Canadian Medical Association

p. 2
Federal Monitoring and Reporting Regime for MAID
https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13853

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Documents

CMA Submission
Federal Monitoring and Reporting Regime for MAID
Submission to Health Canada

May 15, 2017
Medical assistance in dying
https://policybase.cma.ca/link/policy13698

POLICY TYPE  Policy document  
DATE        2017-05-27  
REPLACES  EUTHANASIA AND ASSISTED DEATH (UPDATE 2014)  
TOPICS  Ethics and medical professionalism  

Documents

Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID): CMA Consultation Report

June 2020
CMA Policy

PRINCIPLES FOR THE PROTECTION OF PATIENT PRIVACY

See also Background to CMA Policy for the Protection of Patient Privacy

BACKGROUND

The collection of personal health information has become a pivotal aspect of modern medicine. Since the turn of the century, health-care organizations have embraced new challenges to expand the practice of medicine, helping patients to experience better health outcomes. However, these advancements have increased the vulnerability of patient information, raising significant ethical and privacy concerns.

The protection of personal information is a cornerstone task of any health-care organization, to ensure patients' rights to privacy are respected. Health information, whether it be patient records, research data, or clinical information, is a valuable resource that needs to be protected against unauthorized access or use. In this context, the principles for the protection of personal health information serve as a foundation for health-care organizations to manage and protect patient privacy.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Confidentiality and Security**
   - Health information is a private matter and应当 be treated confidentially and securely. Only authorized individuals with a legitimate need to access the information are allowed to access it.
   - Health information must be protected against unauthorized disclosure, theft, or misuse.

2. **Consent and Authorization**
   - Patients have the right to consent to the use and disclosure of their personal health information.
   - Health-care organizations must seek consent from patients before using or disclosing their personal health information.

3. **Access and Accountability**
   - Patients have the right to access their personal health information.
   - Health-care organizations must maintain records of who accessed the information and the purpose for which it was accessed.

4. **Use and Disclosures**
   - Personal health information shall only be used and disclosed for the purposes for which it was collected.
   - Health-care organizations must ensure that all disclosures of patient information are consistent with the principles of confidentiality and security.

5. **Anonymity and Anonymization**
   - Personal health information should be anonymized or de-identified before it is used for research or other purposes to protect patient privacy.
   - Health-care organizations must employ appropriate measures to protect the confidentiality of personal health information.

6. **Transparency and Accountability**
   - Health-care organizations must be transparent about their policies and practices related to the protection of patient privacy.
   - Health-care organizations must be accountable for their actions and the consequences of those actions.

Conclusion

The principles for the protection of patient privacy provide a framework for health-care organizations to manage and protect patient privacy. By adhering to these principles, health-care organizations can ensure that patient information is handled responsibly, and patient privacy is respected.

The principles outlined above are fundamental to the practice of medicine and to the protection of patient privacy. They form the basis for the development of policies and practices that ensure the confidentiality and security of personal health information.