Medical malpractice expertise: Challenges, advances, and impacts on public trust and quality of health care

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ABSTRACT

Medical malpractice expertise is crucial in forensic medicine to assess adverse events in medical practice and their influence on public trust in the healthcare system. The systematic review of recent articles highlighted the need for standardization in the evaluation criteria and the profound psychological impacts on health professionals involved in medical errors. Studies analyzed revealed significant discrepancies in the diagnoses and consequences of medical errors, such as disability and death.

Keywords: Expertise, Forensic medicine, Medical error.

INTRODUCTION

Medical malpractice expertise, essential in forensic medicine, analyzes adverse events in medical practice. This review addresses the importance of expertise in identifying medical malpractice, discussing its challenges and impacts on public trust in the health system.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In the PubMed database, we searched for articles with terms such as "medical expertise" and "medical error". Studies from the last five years, reviews and relevant case studies were included, totaling 13, of which 4 were selected.

RESULTS

The systematic review revealed several approaches, highlighting divergences in the criteria that evidence the need for standardization. Health professionals face profound psychological impacts due to errors, intensified by the imminence of legal actions1. Studies on orthopedic medical negligence (Shi F, et al. 2019) showed 95 cases with errors, highlighting inadequate observation (27.9%), inappropriate procedures (17.3%), and consequences such as disability (61%) and death (8%)[2]. Another study (Stefan Rusu, et al. 2021), with 473 cases, showed persistence in the discrepancy between clinical diagnoses and postmortem[3].

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis highlighted challenges of forensics, such as technical complexity and variability in interpretation, underscoring the need for efficient communication between experts and practitioners. The fear of retaliation leads to hesitation in reporting errors, increasing the risk of harm to the patient. Strict policies create an adverse environment, leading to staff reluctance to report errors. The review highlights the importance of expertise to ensure medical quality and promote accountability. The diversity of methods and challenges emphasizes the need for unified guidelines and training. Within this, continuous improvement is crucial to strengthen public trust. However, efforts are needed to identify and reduce medical errors, recognizing adverse events, learning from them, and investing in prevention, in order to build a safer and more efficient environment4.

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