When Treatment Fails: How Medicine Cares for Dying Children

In addition to a discussion of questions surrounding whether to withhold or withdraw curative treatments, When Treatment Fails explores the crucial concerns of those medical practitioners who care for dying children: education and training, relation with one another, communicating with patients and families, and finally, coping and moving on. Ultimately, the threads connecting these themes are the great costs and rewards of this difficult work, and the lessons that can be drawn from the nitty-gritty experiences of medical practitioners who struggle to find the balance between trying to defeat death and trying to provide comfort.

Medical care of the terminally ill is one of the most emotionally fraught and controversial issues before the public today. As medicine advances and technologies develop, end-of-life care becomes more individualized and uncertain, guided less by science and more by values and beliefs. The crux of the controversy is when to withhold or withdraw curative treatments--when is enough, enough?

David Bearison looks at this controversial issue from the perspective of the medical staff caring for dying children. Not just doctors, but nurses and counselors as well. By capturing their stories--as no other book has, Bearison is able to move beyond broad, abstract ideas about end-of-life care to convey the situated contexts of such care, including the complications, disagreements, frustrations, confusions, and unexpected setbacks.

Features:
- Cogently captures the voices of those caring for children at the end-of-life in order to convey the content of such care—the complications, disagreements, and unexpected setbacks
- Documents 20 stories of end-of-life care in pediatrics organized by the following themes: withholding or withdrawing curative treatments, pain and suffering, staff communicating with patients and families, staff relating with one another, staff coping and moving on, education and training of staff in end-of-life care, and patients and families reacting to end-of-life care

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