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Choice as care: advance care planning towards the end of life

Choice – in the form of advance care planning – is a key element of English end-of-life care. Advance care planning suggests that knowing patient preferences about death and dying, such as preferred place of death, enables better co-ordinated, personalised health care, and can be a factor in a good death. Tools like the Preferred Priorities for Care (PPC) document have been created to facilitate the process of discussing and capturing patient choice. The underlying theory is that choice is empowering to all involved – the patient, their family and carers, and the healthcare professionals. This talk will use examples from ethnographic research to describe how advance care planning is a form of care practice, and discuss the implications this has for the choice/care dichotomy in social theory.