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CARING FOR MUSLIM PATIENTS IN INTENSIVE CARE- FAITH SENSITIVE END OF LIFE CARE

ROYAL BOLTON HOSPITAL NHS TRUST

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03 INTRODUCTION

Delivering high-quality care to patients of muslim faith (Islam) requires healthcare professionals to have knowledge of the differences in cultural and spiritual values. Muslim patients represent a substantial portion of society within the UK and especially in the north-west of England. The muslim faith encompasses several ethnicities with diverse views regarding illness and healthcare.

This **booklet** will describe practices we can be aware of as healthcare professionals to provide faith and culturally sensitive end of life care to our Muslim patients and their families. When providing care to Muslim patients, it is important to understand the impact the Islamic faith has on the provision of healthcare.

When the cultures of Muslims around the world are compared, there are common features found in all countries, and the variations represent the basic features of the Muslim religious tenets. However, Muslims are not a homogeneous group, and different groups may have varying cultures even though they share the same religious practices. Often behaviors are shaped by cultural practices that are not in concordance with basic religious practices.

As health care professionals, we cannot make assumptions about the needs of Muslim patients and families, so the best practice is to seek knowledge or guidance from the families themselves or the hospital Imaam (faith leader), as well as from literature.

04 END OF LIFE IN ISLAM

The preservation of life is considered paramount in Islam. However, Islam does recognise that death is an inevitable part of human existence and is predestined by Allah (God). Muslims will often be accepting of death and illness. Islam does not require treatment to be provided to a Muslim patient if it merely prolongs the final stages of a terminal illness. Under these circumstances it is permitted to disconnect life supporting systems even though some organs may continue to function automatically under the effect of the supporting devices.

In medically-futile situations where life support equipment is used to prolong organ functions, the condition needs to be carefully explained to the family to ensure there is no confusion between 'do not resuscitate' orders.

If death appears imminent, a Muslim patient's family may wish to perform certain customary religious rites. There is no elaborate or complicated ritual to be performed at the death bed. The simple practice which Muslims follow is to sit near the bed of the patient and read some verses from the Qur'an and pray for the peaceful departure of the soul.

If the patient is in a state of consciousness, they may wish to recite the **Shahadah** (declaration of faith) and pass away while reciting these words.

If the patient's family is not present, healthcare providers must ensure, they are able to communicate with the next of kin, or try to organise someone if possible from the hospital. You can contact the hospital chaplaincy to seek advice from Imam in these circumstances.

In circumstances where death is sudden and a family member is unable to be present, or in circumstances during the pandemic, you can seek advice from the family member or carry out practices highlighted in this booklet.

05 EVENTS PRECEDING DEATH

A person on whom the signs of death are clearly seen is called a 'muhtadar'. It is sunnah (preferred practice) to let them lie on their RIGHT side facing the Qiblah (the direction of the sacred shrine of the Kaaba in Mecca).

In intensive care the bed of the patient can be turned towards the direction of Qiblah. (Qiblah direction compass app can be downloaded on app store on Apple and Android phones). It is permitted that they be positioned to lie on their back with their feet towards the Qiblah, and the head slightly raised with a cushion so that it faces the Qiblah. If this is difficult, due to space and equipment, the comfort of the patient should be prioritised, and this may be left.

All the bed linen must be PAAK (fresh and clean).

At this time the recitals of Surah Yasin (Surah 36), Surah Ar Ra'd (Surah 13) and Surah Baqarah (Surah 2) are recommended. To find the numbers of these Surahs in the Quran cubes, please consult the manual, which comes with the cube. Surah Yasin is often number 36 on most Quran cubes. The Kalimas (The Six Kalimas are the basic beliefs of Muslims all around the world) should also be put on repeat mode on the Quran cubes following the other Surahs.

If the patient is conscious they may read the 1st Kalima themselves before passing.

If possible, healthcare professionals should handle the body of a deceased Muslim as little as possible. Muslims believe that the body 'feels' any pressure that is applied after death. Muslims also believe that the soul remains close to the body until burial.

Please inform the porters as soon as possible, as any delay in this will delay time of burial.

06 THINGS OF RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE

Zamzam water- The Zamzam Well is a well located within the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, east of the Kaaba, the holiest place in Islam.

According to Islam, it is a miraculously generated source of water from Allah. Millions of pilgrims visit the well each year while performing the Hajj or Umrah pilgrimages in order to drink its water. Zamzam water can be drunk by itself, or diluted in tap water, or mixed with food. If patients are being NG fed, this can be mixed with NG water depending on patient and family's wishes.

Tasbih- Islamic prayer beads, they are used by Muslims as a guide during their prayer to the Almighty.

Patients may ask for this when they wish to chant prayers.

Quran- Is the central religious text of Islam, believed by Muslims to be a revelation from Allah (God). All surahs (prayers) recited are found in the book.

Attar- Attar is one of the prized possessions of a Muslim. It is highly concentrated Perfume and therefore is usually offered for sale in small quantities and have traditionally been offered in decorated crystal cut type bottles or small jeweled decanters. Prophet Muhammad (final prophet, messenger of Allah) used to love cleanliness and good scent.

Some like to wear it regularly or put the smell around their clothes or environment.

07 PRACTICAL TASKS IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MOMENT OF DEATH FOR MUSLIMS

1. As soon as a person dies their eyes should be gently closed.
2. Gently press the chin upward while holding the top of the head. Then place a strip of cotton under the chin and around the head, tying it firmly at the top. (if necessary)
3. Remove any jewellery such as rings, necklaces, bracelets and nose studs. (It is especially important to remove rings before swelling occurs).
4. Straighten the limbs carefully and gently. If they will not straighten do not force them.
5. The face should be turned towards Qibla (towards the right if possible).
6. Place the toes together and bind (if necessary) the ankles carefully.
7. Do not cut nails or remove unwanted hair from the dead body.
8. The body should be covered by a paak (clean) sheet until the time of the deceased's bathing- which will be organised following the release from hospital.
9. Please be aware the death certificate may need to be done in a matter of urgency to organise the burial procedure by family. As mentioned above, contact the porters as soon as possible.

08 IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Royal Bolton Hospital

Chaplaincy

Tel: 01204 390770

Email: chaplain@boltonft.nhs.uk

Office hours 7:00a.m – 5p.m Monday to
Friday and Sunday 7:00am – 12 noon.

The Muslim Lead is Moulana Q'ari Faruk Ali.

Bereavement service

Tel: 01204 390448

Interpreters

ext 5517

Dipak 3035 (bleep)

Palliative care team

ext 5395

4012 (bleep)

Bolton Council of Mosques

24 hour Tel line: 01204 392919

