Ethical Considerations in Geriatrics

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objectives

1. Review topics and concepts in health care and medical ethics that present unique challenges in a geriatric population.

2. Apply fundamental ethical principles to situations that may assist in scenarios involving geriatric decision making.

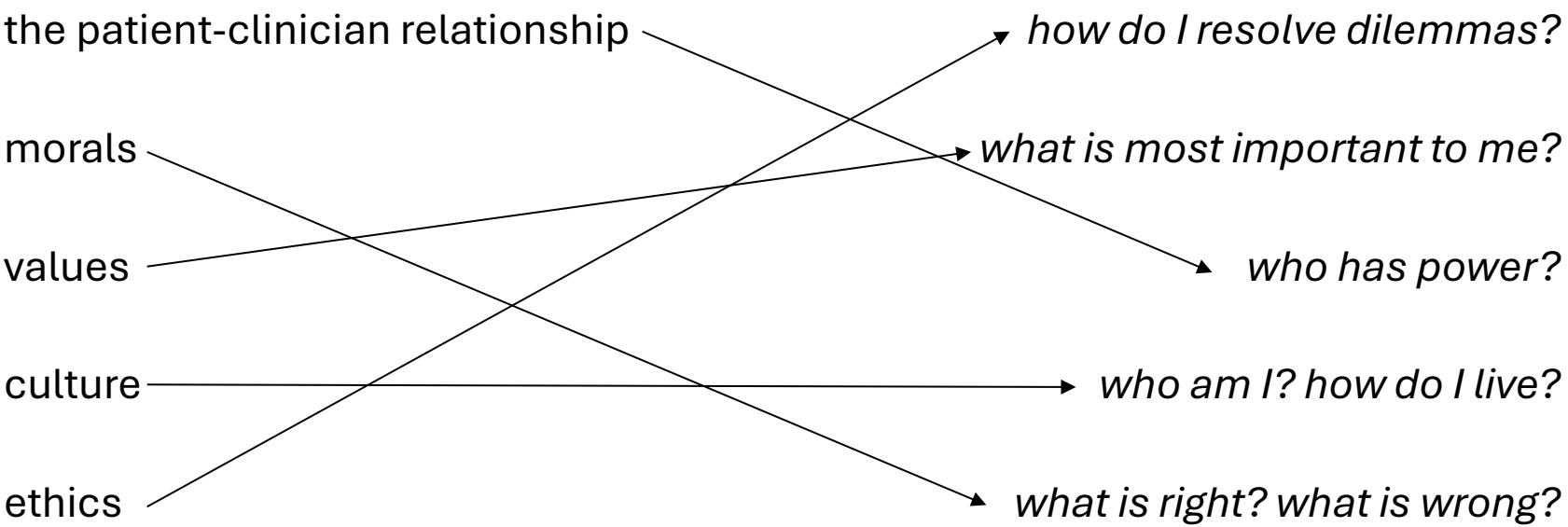
topics

1. the foundations of ethics
2. capacity and medical decision making
3. code status
4. advance care planning
5. *quality of life* considerations

1. the foundations of ethics

1. values, morals, ethics
2. capacity and medical decision making
3. advance care planning
4. code status

1. the foundations of ethics



autonomy | beneficence | justice | non-maleficence

2. capacity and medical decision making

understand | appreciate | voluntariness | must choose

2. capacity and medical decision making

- Is it a *forever* decision?
- What if I change my mind?
- What if I change my mind **and** I don't have capacity anymore?

A person's values, morals, ethics should motivate a person's goals, medical decisions, and advance care plans. …*

*… except when it can't, or shouldn't.

3. code status

What's the goal?

restoration of spontaneous circulation

+

return of respiration

for how long?
temporarily?
to what end?

The real goal of CPR is not temporary return of spontaneous circulation but rather some degree of meaningful recovery that spontaneous circulation permits.

this definition of the goal is only applicable if patient goals and narrative are known

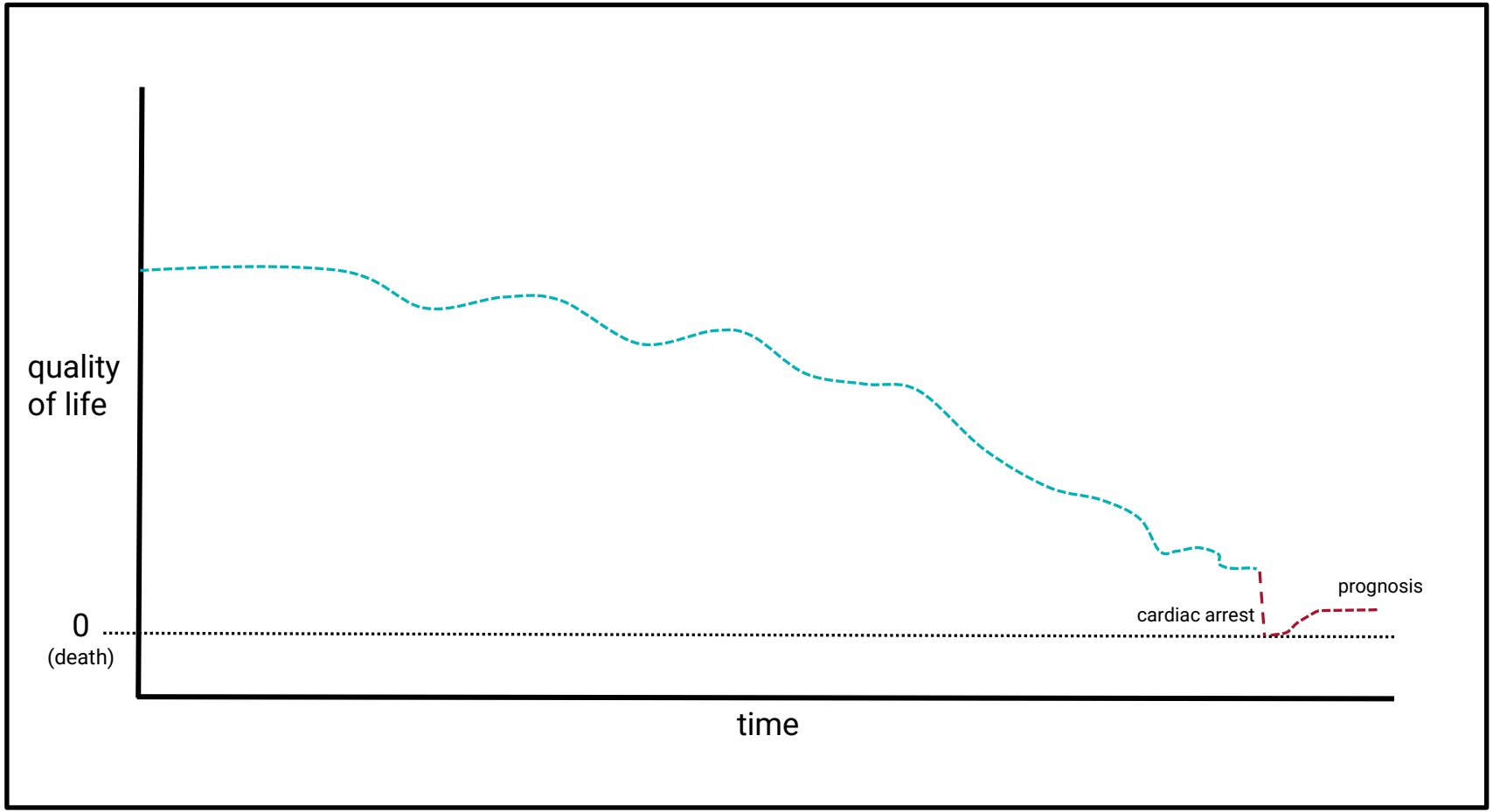
3. code status

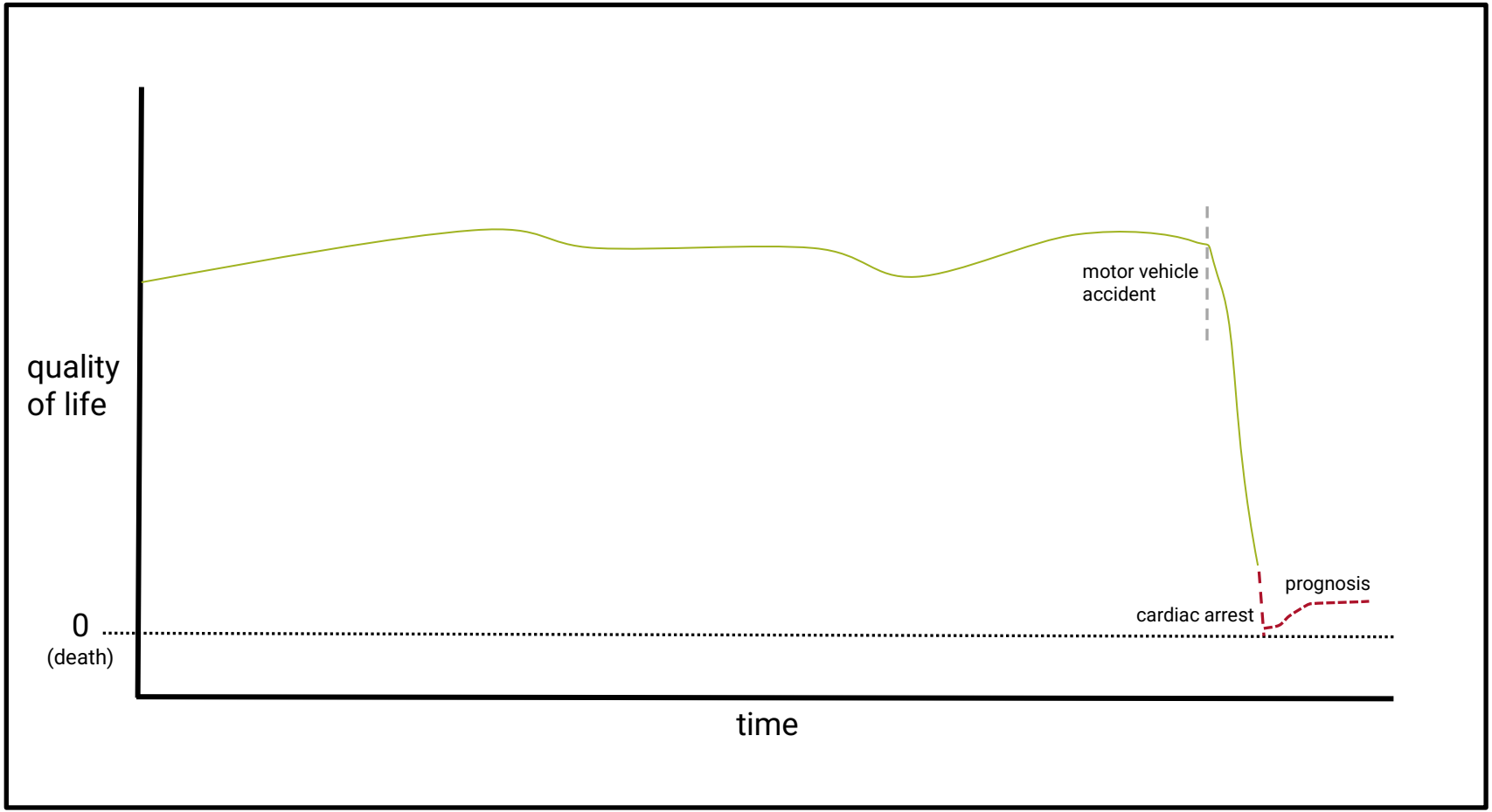
1. Code status = a standing medical order for a future possible situation in which there is inadequate time to consider decisions

2. Medical interventions are considered based on:
   a) eligibility criteria, and
   b) patient preferences, wishes, etc.

   } ***this order matters!***

3. Patients cannot be compelled to treatments they don't want (right to refuse, autonomy, etc.)
4. Clinicians cannot be compelled to treatments they determine to be medically inappropriate (futile or nonbeneficial)


quality
of life
0
(death)
cardiac arrest
prognosis
time


quality
of life
0
(death)
time
motor vehicle
accident
cardiac arrest
prognosis

4. advance care planning

People have the right to make decisions for themselves and for their own body, including future ones or related to future scenarios.

- name an agent (surrogate decision maker)
- describe values, morals, goals, quality of life
- describe certain conditions considered in/tolerable
- make decisions about specific interventions

5. quality of life considerations

What is important to me? What motivates me? What's my 'top 5'?
What is right and wrong? What is reasonable? appropriate? proportional?

What am I trying to accomplish? What do I consider a success?
What is an acceptable outcome? What isn't?

Who am I, what do I do, and how do I do it?

What are you willing to tolerate or endure, or not?
When is enough, enough, for me?

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