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Ethics at the beginning of life

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Care at the Beginning of Life in China

Since Chinese government issued the first national proceeding project based on child development ---The Development Program for Child in China, 1990' in 1992, the local governments on all levels and related offices have taken a series measures to achieve the goal of this program, including setting up three-grade health care network, doing survey on health care of infants and women, such as the procreation history in reproductive women, the state of pregnant health care, the condition of delivery and post-partum as well as infant feeding and health maintenance. Education of health care for women before marriage, and essential standard of special technical service for mother and infant are performed and making strategies to promote and practice new methods on delivering, breast-feeding, mother-infant rooming-in and acutely ill infant care in NICU.

With the advances in medical and nursing care, the infant mortality has reduced from 51.0‰ in 1990 to 32.2‰ in 2000. The incidence of low body weight children under 5 years has reduced from 21.0% in 1990 to 10.0% in 2000. The rate of scheduled immunization has reached above 90.0%, and no poliomyelitis case reported.

However, as a developing country with a numerous population, the government has still been faced with various problems and challenges related to ethical issue. The ethical issue in China is very different as comparing to developed countries including Sweden. The major problem in China is that the health care system has not consummated. The wide gap between the poverty and the richness due to economic reform need urgently to be solved. One side is the infant mortality reaching as high as 34.0‰ in the remote area because of poor medical care, on the other hand a great deal of money spends on infants who suffer an irreversible diseases or severe sequela which require a long stay in NICU in a few big central cities. The infant mortality in those modern cities such as Beijing and Weihai has reduced to 4.6‰ and 3.0‰, respectively. Such polarization could arose medical and nursing ethic issue and be able to be solved by the strategy of developing economy and supporting the child health system in the remote rural area, and of rational use of medical resources in the NICU of the big cities. But can a medical interruption of the infant's life which may depend totally on life support systems be an ethical option? How to take care of the infants in NICU following the nursing ethics?