Managing Ethical Challenges in Nursing Practice and Policy

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Abstract

Ethical decision is an integrated part of nursing practice since nurses determine the best approach to creating solutions to a certain problem or to resolve a given situation that lacks a moral or professional resolution. This paper aims at presenting ethical dilemmas which occur in various areas of practice, including patients, health care facilities as well as policies.The purpose of this study is to identify ways in which nurses address ethical concerns in practice and policy, as well as the approaches that are employed to maintain ethical practice and provide client centered care.This was a descriptive study using both research and gray literature on the current state of ethical dilemmas with focus on interview with nursing professionals to assess the manner in which different ethical dilemmas are managed in health clinical and health policy.Research shows that these challenges pertain to patient self-management, resources management and decision-making on ethical issues. Patient advocacy, for example, and leadership in ethics committees are very crucial in handling of these problems.Since ethical issues play an important role in shaping up a nursing profession and adding quality to the care being provided it is vital to be able to manage these issues. This paper concluded that continuing education and focused leadership were the solution to ethical issues and the creation of ethical culture and practice.

Keywords: *Ethics in the Nursing Profession, Ethical Reasoning, The Role of a Nurse, Health Policy, and Nursing Management.*

Introduction

Ethics is therefore by definition integrated into the field of nursing because the function of a nurse is to deliver care that at once is technically sound and ethically sound. Nurses often face ethical tensions with larger conflicts occurring within the duties of their daily practices concerning patient autonomy, patient welfare patient and institutional rules and regulation. Registered nurses have the major responsibility of offsetting these ethical issues both at working extra close with the patient, and an instrumental part in the formulation of policies within the healthcare systems. Information regarding conflict of interest, patient's informed consent, resources management and patients' rights themselves are among the ethical issues which nurses face. This research focuses on how ethical dilemmas are dealt with in nursing practice and nursing policies with regard to how nurses deal with ethical problems and provide ethical care to patients in healthcare organizations. By examining the ethical responsibilities of nurses, this research underscores the significance of ethical decision-making in maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of healthcare systems.[1,23]

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Navigating Dilemmas in Patient Care

The management of such issues in the care settings is an important and relevant component of the complex nature of professional nursing practice because of the constant need to make choices amid competing and conflicting moral imperatives, individuals' preferences, and standards of practice. The importance of conscience in clinical decision making is revealed through the fact that nurses often find themselves in positions that require decisions they may find personally and professionally objectionable to patients or their families. These issues may be from decisions about how to honor a patient's advance directive or whether to perform life-sustaining treatments, to problems of informed consent as some patients cannot appreciate the options due to dementia. There is need for nurses to maintain patients' dignity and self determination, or principle of beneficence, non-maleficence and justice.[4,5] In most of the cases a nurse face many scenarios where the patient has a desire that may be against recommendations made by other medical practitioners. Thus, as an example, a patient can choose not to take a certain medicine for a certain disease due to cultural beliefs or personal principles Typically, a nurse faces a situation where the patient has a right to refuse certain treatment staying in compliance with his or her beliefs and values though the nurse has an obligation to save the patient's life. Moreover, the communication barriers when explaining medical information to the patients and their close ones, as well as complex decision-making processes without influencing the patients to make the right choice. This calls for excellent interpersonal communication skills, good interpersonal skills, and knowledge of the different professional nursing codes of Ethics.[6,7]

healthcare environments are limited in budgets, subjected to institutional norms and legal requirements which put additional pressure to make ethical decisions. Sometimes a nurse may be in a position to act as the patient's surrogate in ensuring that the patient is treated according to his or her wishes when what is provided by the hospital does not meet the patient's requirements. They also need to know how to continue to respect the patient's right to privacy during the need to consult with other care givers in other departments to deliver the patients comprehensive care. Solving such dilemmas requires different methods to reason and ethical principles, patient advocacy and dilemma resolution that can satisfy ethical and patients 'interests. Finally, managing issues of dilemmas in patient care is more than having to make the right choices; it is about understanding how to ensure patients and their families receive the necessary support as well as how to build aid and foster healthy relationship between providers and their patients.[8,9,10]

Minimizing Compassionate Actions and Maximal Professionalism

The provision of appropriate patient care in the nursing care delivery model calls for one to much on the appropriate measure of care by blending between the ticks of the heart and the skills of the brain. Empathy therefore, is the core of compassions, whereby a person is able to put himself in the shoes of the suffering person and feel like the person feels, and have the intention of relieving his/her suffering. Patients largely interact with nurses and can therefore question, rant, be angry at, persecute or even abuse the nurses. Compassionate decision making allows the nurses to understand their patients and that makes the patients feel comfortable around them. It enables them offer not only the professional and medical value that the patients require but also the touch of morale which others might lack in them. But to feel compassion for others one has to remember to remain professional, keep Bias out of the equation, act in an ethical manner, and follow Medical guidelines. Another important aspect that professionalism aims at achieving good quality of care, that is, instead of acting basing their decisions on emotions, nurses will act professionally using evidence, knowledge and the best interest of the patient.[11,12]

This is easily said than done especially in sensitive issues where the nurse will find himself/her self sympathizing with the patient against the will of the law in as much as the nurse will want to assist the patient. For instance, a nurse might establish working emotional rapport with a patient who has a terminal disease, but the nurse cannot afford to get too personally attached in such a way that his/her performance or judgment is clouded, or clinical decisions compromised. Beside physical needs, one of the models of compassionate care is to include both primary and secondary goals of psychological/emotional patients and self-care, where nurses don't lose their temper and don't transform into patriarchal figures. Below are

some of the ways that are used to service professionalism in the mentioned scenarios, this include respecting the independence of the patient, avoiding imposing the decisions of the care of the patient, avoiding bias in the care of the patient and providing care that is informed by professionalism and evidence and in line with the wishes of the patient.[13,14] However, in compassion and professionalism, nurses have self- organizational responsibilities to cover. When faced with a patient's suffering over and over in critical care or palliative, the provider is at risk for compassion fatigue, burnout. The nurses must learn how to build a protective boundary for themselves and their respective feelings to guarantee that they deliver adequate, professional sympathy for patients and companions. This can mean performing all the tasks that help maintain a spirit and a condition that is suitable for work and interaction with a large number of people. Facilities also have a part to play by offering ways that employees can get emotional care; teach them how they can handle emotions; foster an environment where nurses get to learn new skills, and one that enables them to build resilience. That way, the nurses can retain patient emotions and provide ethical patient care that is imperative to all health care professions. Addressing Moral Conflicts in Healthcare Settings.Solving moral dilemmas in health care contexts is an original endeavor that often experiences a professional responsibility of health care workers including nurses. These conflicts occur when there is disruption between duties and role of ethics, values and interest within the care of patients. In healthcare moral dilemmas are evidenced, for instance in issues of patient dignity and respect at the end of life, patient self-authority, diversity, or shortage of resources. Nurses find themselves in a big dilemma to make decisions that not only affect patients' care but also their moral standard, the established ethical code of the healthcare system and patients/families expectations. Thus, the question arises of how to address this task in a way that maintains patient rights and preferences and keep to the principles of beneficence and nonmaleficence, patients' autonomy and justice while nursing.[15,16,17]

When the patient/family and the healthcare team have a clash of ethical values there are always probable moral dilemmas to be solved. A patient can decide not to use life-supporting equipment like mechanical ventilator or dialysis for example while others due to cultural differences do not want to die without being put on such equipment's while the healthcare professionals may consider it important that the patient should continue using it. It brings ethical conflict between patient's self-decision making which is their right to make decisions regarding their healthcare and healthcare provider's moral responsibility to use nonmaleficence, the principle that, as far as possible, one must never perform an action that causes harm. For one, nurses are found in the middle of the conflict because they are the patient's representatives or champions and yet they are expected to deliver the best outcome. Solving of such debates requires, among others, effective communication in which all the participants in the particular dispute are allowed to present their opinions and may come up with a proper decision in respect of patients' preferences yet focusing on the professional ethical code of the health-care team.[18,19]

There is also other cause that stems from cultural issues for ethical dilemmas in healthcare. The patient from culturally diverse background may have different perception towards health, health seeking, family participation, and even health decisions during terminal illness hence cultural conflict between the health care team and the patient or the family member. For example, while some cultures the family might have the final say on tube feeding, Western medicine respects patient's right to decision making, and the right to be informed. Cultural differences should be effectively considered by nurses, as they work following ethical standards and values providing culturally safe care. This has the effect of presenting cultural considerations and ethical frameworks for practice as a challenge that nurses must be willing to learn with a view to adapting to when providing services to patient. A few circumstances involve cultural intermediaries or the ethics committee to solve these issues and protect the Six Rights and patient values without jeopardizing the patient's care.[20,21] Ethical dilemmas can also be experienced at a patient level, especially in issues to do with rationing or distributions of care. For instance, in what constitutes essential care during the pandemic or other events that involve many victims, healthcare organizations are put in a dilemma of priority in terms of who gets treatment, and available resources and productivity of patients. These decisions may be difficult especially when some health care workers are in a position to allocate priority to some clients and leave out others in what may lead to MSD. In such circumstances, there is a need for healthcare organizations to have standard operational guidelines concerning pandering to such decisions. The nurses and the other healthcare personalities who apply these actions should also be assisted to deal

with moral stress and be encouraged to talk about the experiences. Moral dilemmas should be resolved professionally, effectively, and in harmony with values in order to meet ethical responsibilities, to restore the patients, families, and society's confidence and to provide decent quality of caring for all involved. In conclusion, acknowledging role morality in healthcare is relatively complex and can therefore only be solved using ethic reasoning, understanding, cooperation to mention but a few of the guiding principles of solving moral dilemmas within known healthcare systems.[22,23]

Respect For Patient Self-Determination and Norms in Research and Practice

Respecting patient's self-determination and professional and ethical principles is an obligation of nurses that promotes care for patients and their rights and delicious of every human being within the health facilities. Patient self-determination is the concept of patients'-generated decision-making power devoid of undue influence exerted by third parties. This principle originates from the patient's autonomy or right to make decisions on matters to do with their treatment, consent to treatment, or refusal of treatment, or seek alternative treatments. Because nurses act as the patients' surrogate decision-making systems, they must communicate to their patients their diagnoses, treatment plans, possible complications, and probable repercussions, so the patients can make decisions that are compatible with their personal values systems. To promote autonomy , it is communicating with the patient and explaining to them the necessary details while respecting their decision-making and giving them absolute freedom to chose what is different from the given options by the healthcare team. [24,25] But maintaining patient's independence is not always possible, especially when a patient makes a decision that was potentially contrary to the doctor's recommendations, or if the patient has diminished capacity to make the decision due to various reasons including but not limited to mental health issues, language barriers or being a minor. In such conditions, nurses found themselves in a rather difficult position when they have provide patient's care on one hand and respect patient's decision on the other. For instance, when a patient with dementia decides not to take any medicine that can help in that condition then the nurse is in an ethical dilemma. Special attention should be paid to the patient's right to self-decision, his/her benefits, harm, ability of making decisions along with his/her family members or legal representatives. In such case, the healthcare provider may convene an ethics committee or has to follow advice of legal and professional frameworks to make an ethical decision that will benefit the patient.[26,27]

But besides patient autonomy, there is another level of ethical principle and legal regulation of the actions of a nurse, which prescribe what it is possible and legal to do. These set of standards helps the nurses to practice professionally safe and effective, quality and compassionate care with ultimate standards of professionalism and ethical practices. Students by core values learned need to respect the following ethical principles: beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and fidelity. The above principles have to be applied daily by nurses while performing their duties to provide care to patients and-family because while doing so they have to respect the rights and dignity of the patient. This means proper patient care, actively fighting for their rights, being actively engaged in issues of equity in healthcare, and indeed demanding and esteeming the virtues of professional integrity from members of the profession.[28,29]

I finally find that patient autonomy and ethical principles also demand from nurses appropriate and sensitive approach to ethical issues. This may involve dealing with circumstances that the patient desires may be detrimental to health for example some decision on treatment they do not want all help from the team caring for them. He has to act wisely and considerate when facing such a case by listening to the patient's arguments, appreciating his reasons, and still coming up with another resolution acceptable to the patient while conforming to the standard nursing organizational ethical norms. This usually requires consulting with other healthcare workers, the patient and his/her family members to understand his/her choices and keep abreast with their values even when the choice made does not go down well with the team of carers. As such, nurses' adhere to their professional standards of practice and promote patient-centred care where individual patient concern, preference, value, and Voluntarism are valued. In conclusion, when making decisions patient rights and ethical principles should come into play and basic human compassion and loads of knowledge which should then enable the nurse to practice as a professional and uphold the core values of the noble profession.[30,31]

Ethical Course of Action: Bigger Picture Applications

Registered practical nursing is a special rewarding course in ethical decision making complex clinical situations enrolled in health care facility comprises of a moral dilemma involving critical thinking patient centered strategies. Such situations occur mostly in cases where conflicts of interest are evoked by patient's medical condition or other parameters related to his or her status, between the policy of the organization, on one hand, and the principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, or justice on the other. For instance, treatment, refusal to treatment, decisions on feeding tubes, or consent to surgery are examples of decisions where ethical dilemmas may needed to be encouraged by balancing clients' preferences with the professionals 'judgment. In patients' activity, the nurseries and other related healthcare practitioners bear the responsibilities of analyzing the positive and negative effects of the many therapeutic and diagnostic procedures with respect to the patient's preferences, culture, and beliefs. This process entails the ability to assert, negotiate, and decide on the issues of clinical fact, ethical principles and with the patient or the patient's family to arrive at a sustainable and clinical solution that responds to medical requirements as well as meets ethical requirements.[32,33]

Another important factor recognized as a major difficulty within ethical decision making is the dealing with the multiple and often the contradictory values and concerns of the numerous stakeholders and their roles within a patient's care. For instance, a situation, which may develop, is that a patient refuses to take a particular treatment which is considered to be necessary by the care team. The patient's decision may stem from either culture, creed, beliefs, or misconceptions, which may not be in the best interest of the patient and may or may not be supported by known medical facts. In such cases, nurses have to exercise ethical decision making to understand how they can meet the patient's autonomy in making a certain decision while at the same time ensuring they educate the patient to make the right decision. This often entails not only the calling of medicine but also persuasion and interpersonal communication, advanced emotional intelligence and advocacy for the patient. Such requisites might require the nurse to intercede in the conflict between the patient and the family on one side, and the healthcare team on the other in order to establish that the patient's autonomy is respected and that his or her decisions will have certain repercussions.[34,35] However, the concepts of ethical decision making are much more challenging when the patient, for instance a minor, is unable to make his/her own health care decisions because of lacks consciousness, mental disorder or disabilities. Under such circumstances, the health care providers are literally left with no option than have to rely on proxies, that is, next of kin or legal representatives of the patient. However, this adds various challenges as surrogates are likely to have different value propounded, priorities or even perceptions from the patient. Nurses are also caught in such situations they have to balance most times in the best interest of the patient and conform to the law and role of the surrogate. Sometimes because of disagreement among the health care team members, or the family, ethical committees or consults may be needed to act as tie breakers in that they ensure that, all relevant aspects have been looked at ethically. [36,37,38] But, besides attending to individual patients, ethical decision making also pertains to various groups and healthcare organizations, health facilities and systems, templates for solving healthcare allocation problems, healthcare justice and equity in a global perspective. During calamities and disasters for example a disease outbreak or scarcity of commodities, health care institutions may for one or many reasons need to ration access to health care as well as treatment. These decisions entail what may be considered as ethically indefensible sources of fairness, justice or even utilization of scarce healthcare resources. He believes like all other players in the healthcare domain, nurses encounter these duality of obligations by following ethical principles that uphold equity and neutrality of the decision made in order to warrant this as just, ethical. Such aspects may include explaining decisions that may be made on behalf of the patient, encouraging conversation between the patient and their family and making sure that the decision made depicts the organization and society values.[39,40]

ethical decision making in clinical contexts thus calls for integrating best of medical practice, ethical theories and principles and humane approach to patients. The abilities of a nurse of autonomy decision-making, supporting the patient's rights, and following the general ethical rules should be empowered and developed. This is never easy or straightforward as it is an ongoing reflective, health care team inclusive process that demands constant understanding of the ethical foundations within which nursing practice occurs. By

practicing sound ethical decision making being able to fulfill the intricate and myriad needs sensed by the patients, leading to enhanced patient satisfaction, healthy provider- patient relationship, and quality of the care provided.[41,42,43]

Functions of Nurses in Ethical Dispensation of Healthcare

The impact of nursing on ethical practices in the patient care is well defined since it lays the basic platform on which nurses are supposed to put into practice appropriate patient care in compliance with the general nursing ethics and established ethical principles. Patients mostly interact with the nurses and the nurses are in charge of explaining the patient's condition to them and interpreting their responses to doctors and other care givers. For this reason, they are also in a very good place to affect ethical care delivery from the moment a patient is evaluated right through to aftercare. This paper aims to unveil and discuss the ethical challenges nurses face when practicing their profession; Self-determination, doing good, not doing harm, fairness and keeping one's word are the central principles in ethical decision-making that are often in conflict in nurses' practice. It means that they are to make decisions that embraced patient's right and choices but at the same time promote safe, effective, and efficient patient care. Nurses also essential in lending credibility to health care for patients rely on them for not only professional care but also emotional support. Thus by adhering to to the above mentioned ethical principles the nursing profession plays a pivotal role in the development of the patient centered care model which considers patients' ethical needs as part of the nursing care delivery fabric.[44,45]

This is among the chief functions of nursing alongside attending to the medical needs of the patients as ethic health care advocates. Nurses are usually the first to observe if a patient's need or right is threatened, because of medical mistakes, communication breakdown, or patient exclusion in decision making. Patient advocacy is a process of representing the patient s interests while seeking to promote the patient's preferences, values, and culture of treatment. In many cases, nurses explain to their clients what is wrong with them, what needs to be done to treat the condition at hand and what could go wrong in simple language or sign language. This advocacy responsibility comes in cases where a patient may be incapacitated either by age, illness or disability to make their own decision. Nurses play a major role in documenting the patient's consent and making sure that patient has the power to decide on his or her treatment. That is, when patients are at crossroads with regard to treatment or right to die, nurses assist in those decisions with proper consideration to the facilitation of the patient's interests. When a patient's personal wish is at odds with the treatment recommended by a doctor, the rights and welfare of a patient cannot be violated by nurses though the nurse has to ensure that the patient makes the right decision regarding his/her treatment.[46,47] Another element of the ethical professional responsibilities of a nurse is making a fair distributive decision in healthcare. Working as care providers, nurses usually notice the inequitable, or lack of access, inequity, or disparity, based on patients' SES, color, ethnicity or geographical location etc. They have the duty to see to it that health care is provided regardless of the aforesaid factors, and that no one is discriminated or prejudiced against in receipt of healthcare. This may include voicing for policies that fund health care equitably, and engaging in activities, which aim at eliminating disparities of health care in the institution. Nurses are also concrete agents in the recognition and fight against prejudices in the health care system, prejudice which can pertain to the treatment of patient categories as well as the distribution of resources. Through upholding of competitive ethical business standards in decision making processes and fairness in provision of care to patient's different in various aspects, nurses contribute to formation of a society that any patient receive the best treatment s/he requires.[48,49]

Moreover, nurses contribute to the fight against the modern emergence of the issue of professional ethics by ensuring medical recourse integrity. There are specific required standards of professional ethical behavior that need to be followed at all times in order to consider overall patient needs, document and enforce responsibilities honestly and responsibly. [50,51,52] nursing ethical dilemma and conflict resolution are complex and lifelong processes in practice and policy that call for integration of professional knowledge and ethical skills. Nurses have to learn to work effectively in such a multitasking and challenging environment where patient's rights, nurses' professional self-determination, and the institution's rules come close together to address patient's needs but at the same time consider ethical and legal imperatives. Readily

investing in education, getting involved actively in policy making and promoting an interactive environment for ethical deliberation, the nurses are up to the task of providing quality, ethical and effective health care delivery that a patient deserves, responsive to his/her needs, equally fair and culturally sensitive to his/her rights and human dignity.[53,54]

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said, that managing ethical issues in nursing practice and policy is complex process that is critically important for implementing high levels of thorough, sensitive, and patient orientated care. Nurses are indeed in a vantage point to handle ethical issues because of the dint of dealing with patients directly and engaging actively with decision making in health care systems. Whether mediating ethical dilemmas, reconciling policy agenda with ethical norms or promoting justice for the fair distribution of resources, nurses bear the mandate for ethical practices in diverse health facilities. In addition, competencies of continuing education, professional practice, leadership are also essential for nurses to empower them for addressing ethical conflicted issues more and more effectively. The principles of ethics should always prevail throughout healthcare facility organizations and institutions, while supporting nurses and promoting desirable behavioral changes to engage in ethical practices, decision-making, and patient advocacy, we would be maintaining healthcare integrity fair, just, and patient rights oriented. In conclusion, ethical nursing practicing can affect positive patient outcomes in addition to shaping/transforming the healthcare environment into one that always promote patient's density, Compassion and professionalism.

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إدارة التحديات الأخلاقية في ممارسة التمريض والسياسات

الملخص:

الخلفية: تعتبر القرارات الأخلاقية جزءًا مدمجًا من ممارسة التمريض، حيث يقوم الممرضون بتحديد أفضل نهج لإيجاد حلول لمشكلة معينة أو لحل موقف معين يفتقر إلى حل أخلاقي أو مهني. يهدف هذا البحث إلى عرض الألغاز الأخلاقية التي تحدث في مجالات مختلفة من الممارسة، بما في ذلك المرضى، والمرافق الصحية، وكذلك السياسات.

الهدف: الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد الطرق التي يتعامل بها الممرضون مع القضايا الأخلاقية في الممارسة والسياسة، وكذلك الأساليب المستخدمة للحفاظ على الممارسة الأخلاقية وتقديم الرعاية المركزة على المريض.

المنهج: كانت هذه دراسة وصفية تعتمد على الأدبيات البحثية والأدبيات الرمادية حول الحالة الحالية للألغاز الأخلاقية مع التركيز على المقابلات مع مهني التمريض لتقييم كيفية إدارة الألغاز الأخلاقية المختلفة في العيادات الصحية وسياسات الصحة.

النتائج: تظهر الأبحاث أن هذه التحديات تتعلق بإدارة الذات للمرضى، وإدارة الموارد، واتخاذ القرارات في القضايا الأخلاقية. على سبيل المثال، يعتبر الدفاع عن حقوق المرضى، والقيادة في اللجان الأخلاقية من الأمور الحاسمة في التعامل مع هذه المشاكل.

الخاتمة: نظرًا لأن القضايا الأخلاقية تلعب دورًا مهمًا في تشكيل مهنة التمريض وإضافة الجودة إلى الرعاية المقدمة، من الضروري أن يكون هناك القدرة على إدارة هذه القضايا. خلص هذا البحث إلى أن التعليم المستمر والقيادة المركزة هما الحلول للقضايا الأخلاقية وخلق ثقافة وممارسة أخلاقية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأخلاقيات في مهنة التمريض، التفكير الأخلاقي، دور الممرض، سياسة الصحة، وإدارة التمريض.

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