

ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL ISSUE IN NURSING

Abstract

Ethics is a crucial aspect of nursing, as it involves understanding one's own thoughts and societal perceptions of appropriate behavior. Nursing professionals often deal with clinical dilemmas with patients and decisions regarding specific diseases and treatments. The majority of ethical issues in the field of nursing center on human rights or direct client care issues. A profession with a strong foundation in moral principles and professional ethics is nursing, which includes principles such as human dignity, integrity, altruism, and justice. The nurse-patient relationship is a key idea in nursing theory and practice, focusing on human interactions, excellent communication skills, and mutual cooperation. Nurses must create and maintain a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship, which should be collaborative and patient-centered. This relationship requires nurses to support the patient's ability to survive and recover from illness, foster their independence, and, in cases of terminal illness, lessen physical symptoms like pain and foster dignity. Patients believe that the nurse-patient relationship is just as valuable as other clinical interventions, and establishing this kind of helpful relationship requires nurses to be accessible, spend enough time with them, and pay close attention to verbal outcomes. Critical reflection on various subjects, such as the function of a nurse, the appropriate interpersonal behaviors, and the moral qualities nurses should exhibit when providing nursing care, is necessary for high-quality nursing care to be provided. These are character traits, or more precisely, moral virtues. There are several ethical principles in nursing, autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, veracity, and justice. In conclusion, ethical principles in nursing include autonomy, beneficence, justice, veracity, honesty, and truthfulness. By understanding these principles and applying them in practice, nurses can provide high-quality care to their patients and uphold the highest standards of ethical conduct in the field.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Understanding one's own thoughts is crucial in order to think ethically about a situation. What society perceives as appropriate behavior and the right thing to do seems to be the focus of ethics. Ethics is the study of the various considerations that go into choosing a particular course of action. By establishing ground rules or guidelines for what constitutes appropriate behavior, it also relates to people's regular interactions with one another. Internationally, it is acknowledged that nurses' work must include a fundamental component of ethics. Nursing professionals regularly deal with clinical dilemmas with patients as well as decisions regarding particular diseases and treatments. While the existing ethical frameworks and "nursing codes of ethics" put forth by top nursing organizations typically focus on increasing the ethical sensitivity or competence of nurses, the majority of ethical issues that arise in the field of nursing tend to center on human rights or direct client care issues.

A profession with a strong foundation in moral principles and professional ethics is nursing. Human dignity, integrity, altruism, and justice are significant professional nursing principles that serve as a framework for standards, professional practice, and evaluation. These principles are referred to as professional nursing values. Any profession, including the nursing profession, is fundamentally influenced by values. In the code of ethics, professional values are stated. The Indian Nursing Council's code of ethics and code of professional conduct for nurses must be followed by all newly registered nurses in India. The nurses' provision of high-quality care to their patients is guided by professional ethics and values. Professional values also help people develop an ethical framework by influencing their principles and standards of behavior. Professional values are standards for conduct accepted by professional organizations and individuals and used to assess the honesty of a person or group.

Nurse-patient relationship has become a key idea in nursing theory and practice, seen in terms of human interactions, excellent communication skills, and mutual cooperation. Outlines specific traits of a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship, such as the notion that this relationship should be collaborative and patient-centered. One of the nurse's primary responsibilities is the creation and maintenance of a therapeutic nurse-patient relationship. Even though this is a complicated subject, there are points of convergence. Included in these are the notions that nurses should support the patient's ability to survive and recover from illness, foster their independence, and, in cases of terminal illness, lessen physical symptoms like pain and foster dignity. The patients should think that having and displaying a number of personal characteristics, qualities, or skills is necessary for a nurse to be considered a "good" nurse and to deliver high-quality care. Kindness, tolerance, and patience are qualities that help nurses provide high-quality care, and compassion is a vital quality that nurses must possess in order to provide morally upright care.

Patients believe that the nurse-patient relationship described above is just as valuable as other clinical interventions, establishing this kind of helpful relationship with patients requires that nurses be accessible to them, spend enough time with them, and pay close attention to verbal outcomes. So it makes sense to suggest that critical reflection on a variety of subjects, such as the function of a nurse, the appropriate interpersonal behaviors, and the moral qualities nurses should exhibit when providing nursing care, is necessary if high-quality nursing care is to be provided. These are character traits, or more precisely, these are

illustrations of moral virtues. As a result, it is wise to study moral philosophy and the characteristics of virtues.

II. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN NURSING

- 1. Autonomy:** The fundamental ethical principle known as "autonomy" in nursing refers to the patients' right to make their own healthcare and treatment decisions. It respects the patient's right to self-determination in matters pertaining to their well-being and acknowledges the patient's capacity to make informed decisions. This principle is based on the idea that people have the freedom to decide what happens to their bodies, including whether or not to accept medical interventions in accordance with their individual values, beliefs, and preferences. Advocacy, Capacity and Competence Assessment, Informed Consent, Shared Decision-Making, Respecting Patient Choices, and Confidentiality and Privacy However, nursing ethics do not always adhere to the principle of autonomy. Patient autonomy may be restricted or overridden in some circumstances, such as when patients pose a threat to themselves or others or when their choices have the potential to cause significant harm.
- 2. Beneficence:** The obligation to act in the patient's best interests and advance their wellbeing Nurses must work hard and make a positive difference in the patient's wellbeing. One of the fundamental moral tenets of nursing and healthcare is beneficence. It speaks to the duty of all medical professionals, including nurses, to act in the patients' best interests and to advance their general well-being. The idea that medical professionals should actively try to do good and act in their patients' best interests is the foundation of the beneficence principle. Providing Quality Care, Balancing Risks and Benefits, Prioritising Patient Well-Being, Cultural Sensitivity, and End-of-Life Care are some important components of beneficence in nursing ethics.
- 3. Non-Maleficence:** "Do no harm" is a principle of non-maleficence. Patients should not be harmed or injured by nurses, and if it is unavoidable, the harm should be minimized as much as possible. Another essential ethical principle in nursing and healthcare is non-maleficence. The phrase "do no harm" is frequently used to emphasise the duty of healthcare professionals, including nurses, to prevent inflicting harm on their patients. This principle emphasises how crucial it is to put patient safety, wellbeing, and harm prevention first in all facets of nursing practise. Safe practise, the avoidance of errors, competence, and knowledge are important components of non-maleficence in nursing ethics. Critical Analysis Ethical Conundrums. Recognising that healthcare interventions always involve some level of risk is crucial, as is always preventing harm. It is essential to understand that all healthcare interventions involve some level of risk, and it might not always be possible to completely prevent harm. In these situations, nurses must carefully weigh potential benefits and risks and give the highest priority to taking steps that will cause the least amount of harm.
- 4. Justice:** Ensuring equity and fairness in the allocation of healthcare resources and patient access all patients should receive equal care from nurses without exception. One of the guiding moral principles in nursing and healthcare is justice. It has to do with how equally and fairly patients and populations are given access to opportunities, resources, and healthcare services. The justice principle emphasizes the significance of providing all

patients with equal access to high-quality care and treating them fairly and without bias. Fairness, equity, resource allocation, ethical decision-making when faced with resource constraints or ethical quandaries, and respect for patients' rights are important components of justice in nursing ethical considerations.

5. **Veracity:** Veracity in ethics refers to the values of honesty and truthfulness in communication. Being honest with patients and coworkers is a fundamental ethical principle that nurses and other healthcare professionals must follow. Being truthful means giving patient's accurate and thorough information, abstaining from lying, and being open and honest in all healthcare interactions. Truthful Communication, Disclosure of Medical Errors, Privacy and Confidentiality, and Avoiding Deception are important facets of ethical veracity. Observing dignity and fostering trust Overall, honesty is a crucial component of moral nursing practise because it promotes openness, respect, and trust in healthcare interactions and guarantees that patients have the information they need to make wise decisions about their care.
6. **Fidelity:**The responsibility to uphold commitments and obligations, such as maintaining patient privacy and maintaining confidentiality. Fidelity in nursing ethics is the moral precept of loyalty and upholding commitment to patients and the nursing profession. In order to care for patients and uphold the standards of the nursing profession, a nurse must always be devoted, dependable, and trustworthy. Patient-centered care, reliability, honesty, competence, respect for diversity, teamwork, and satisfaction with their care are important components of nursing ethics.
7. **Accountability:** Accepting accountability for one's choices and actions Clinical and ethical judgements are the responsibility of nurses. Accountability is a key nursing concept that emphasizes nurses' accountability for their actions and choices when providing patient care. It entails taking responsibility for one's actions and the results of nursing practise. To ensure that nurses provide their patients with high-quality, safe, and ethical care while upholding the standards of the nursing profession, accountability is crucial. Patient safety is a crucial component of nursing accountability. Patients' safety is the responsibility of the nurses. In order to avoid harm and reduce risks while providing patient care, they must follow accepted protocols and best practises and take the necessary precautions. Professional Conduct, Competent Practise, Documentation, Collaboration, and Communication In addition to holding individual nurses accountable, the healthcare system and the organisations where nurses work are also held responsible. It entails a dedication to fostering a culture of openness and learning from errors while supporting safe and moral practise and offering resources for professional development.

III. ETHICAL PROBLEMS IN NURSING

Conflicts between these principles or circumstances where the proper course of action is ambiguous can cause ethical quandaries in nursing practice. End-of-life care, informed consent, resource allocation, confidentiality, and cultural considerations are examples of frequent ethical quandaries in nursing. Nurses can contribute to the ethical practice of nursing as a whole and maintain the trust and confidence of patients and the public by upholding ethical standards. Gathering pertinent data, taking into account various viewpoints, and, if necessary, seeking advice from coworkers or ethics committees.

1. **Patient Autonomy and Informed Consent:** Striking a balance between the obligation to respect patients' autonomy and the duty to provide sufficient information for informed decision-making.
2. **End-of-Life Care:** Handling complex problems involving palliative care, stopping life-sustaining procedures, and respecting patients' wishes while taking into account their best interests
3. **Patient Confidentiality:** Protecting patient data while making sure that healthcare providers communicate effectively to ensure continuity of care.
4. **Moral Distress:** Individuals who experience internal conflicts when they believe the care they are giving may not be in line with their moral principles or when they see behaviors they deem to be unethical.
5. **Resource Allocation:** Dealing with moral conundrums when allocating scarce resources, particularly in times of dearth or crisis.
6. **Advocacy and Patient Rights:** Upholding patients' rights and welfare despite organisational policies or requirements that conflict with them.
7. **Conflict of Interest:** Dealing with circumstances where one's personal interests might impede sound judgement or negatively affect patient care.
8. **Technology and Privacy:** Addressing moral questions pertaining to data security, patient privacy, and the use of technology in the digital age.
9. **Informed Refusal:** Handling patients who reject interventions or treatment that is deemed medically necessary.
10. **Pediatric Care Dilemmas:** Providing care for children presents special ethical challenges because parental or guardian involvement in decision-making is common.
11. **Workplace Issues:** Addressing moral issues with employee interactions, workplace hierarchy, and interacting with impaired coworkers.
12. **Inclusivity and Equity:** Making sure all patients receive equitable care while addressing potential biases and health disparities.
13. **Experimental Treatments and Research:** Handling ethical dilemmas when taking part in or carrying out research, especially on vulnerable populations.

Addressing these ethical problems requires a solid understanding of ethical principles, ongoing ethical education, and communication with interdisciplinary teams and ethics committees. Nurses are encouraged to seek support and guidance from colleagues, nursing organizations, and healthcare institutions to ensure ethical practice and provide the best possible care for their patients.

IV. PROFESSIONAL ISSUES IN NURSING

The term "professional issues" in nursing refers to a broad range of difficulties and worries that nurses may experience throughout their careers. These problems may have an impact on both the practise of the individual nurse and the nursing profession as a whole. Here are a few typical nursing professional issue.

- 1. Nursing Staff Shortage:** Many healthcare systems are experiencing a nursing staff shortage, which can result in increased workloads, burnout, and subpar patient care. A significant and ongoing professional problem in nursing that has an impact on healthcare systems all over the world is the shortage of nursing staff. A lack of qualified nurses to meet the rising demand for patient care in a variety of healthcare settings is what defines the shortage.
- 2. Workplace Stress and Burnout:** Nursing can be a physically and emotionally taxing profession, which makes nurses more susceptible to stress and burnout. Patient safety and job satisfaction may be impacted by high levels of stress.
- 3. Nurse-Patient Ratio:** Inadequate nurse-patient ratios can have a negative effect on patient outcomes and put additional stress on nurses, which can lower the level of care they can offer. The number of patients assigned to each nurse in a healthcare setting at any given time is referred to as the nurse-patient ratio. The nurse-patient ratio is a crucial variable that can have a big impact on nurse well-being, care quality, and patient safety.
- 4. Continuing Education and Professional Development:** To stay current with the healthcare industry's quick evolution, you must continue your education and professional development. Some nurses may find it difficult to get access to training and career advancement opportunities.
- 5. Nursing Regulation and Licensure:** Nurses are subject to regulatory and licencing requirements as well as professional standards, which can differ between jurisdictions.
- 6. Ethical Challenges:** As was previously mentioned, nurses may run into moral conundrums in the course of their work that call for careful thought and judgement.
- 7. Nurse Leadership and Empowerment:** To improve patient care and organisational outcomes, nurses' voices and perspectives must be valued and incorporated into healthcare decision-making processes.
- 8. Gender Bias and Workplace Discrimination:** Nursing is still largely a female-dominated profession, and these issues can limit opportunities for advancement in the field and equal pay.
- 9. Patient Safety and Care Quality:** Nursing practise is constantly concerned with maintaining patient safety and providing high-quality care. Negative incidents and errors may have detrimental effects.

10. **Technology Integration:** As technology is used more frequently in healthcare, nurses are faced with challenges related to training, protecting patient privacy, and adjusting to new workflows.
11. **Violence and Workplace Safety:** Patients, families, or coworkers may verbally or physically abuse nurses, which can have a negative impact on their well-being and job satisfaction.
12. **Inter professional Collaboration:** For healthcare professionals to provide thorough patient care, effective teamwork and communication are essential.

Collaboration between nurses, nursing organizations, healthcare organizations, policymakers, and other stakeholders is necessary to address these professional issues in nursing. It necessitates constant work to enhance working conditions, foster career advancement, encourage continuing education, and create a supportive and welcoming workplace for nurses. Addressing these problems also improves patient outcomes and healthcare delivery as a whole.

- **Expand Educational Capacity:** Increasing faculty positions and funding for nursing education programmes can increase the number of new nurses entering the field.
- **Increase Nurse Retention:** Healthcare institutions can employ strategies to increase nurse retention, including competitive salaries, chances for professional advancement, and fostering a positive work environment.
- **Encourage Work-Life Balance:** Policies that support work-life balance can lessen burnout and boost nurse satisfaction. Examples include flexible scheduling and lowering required overtime.
- **Recruitment and Incentives:** To recruit and keep nursing staff, healthcare facilities can use targeted recruitment strategies and provide incentives like signing bonuses or tuition reimbursement.
- **Interprofessional Collaboration:** To share responsibilities and maximise resource use, healthcare organisations can investigate collaborative models of care that include other healthcare professionals.
- **Policy and Advocacy:** Policymakers and nursing organisations can support initiatives aimed at increasing the nursing workforce and advocate for policies that address the nursing shortage.

V. CONCLUSION

Nurses should be aware of their profession's code of ethics as well as their own morality and integrity. Key ethical principles should be understood by nurses in a basic and understandable way. The nursing profession must uphold its commitment to patient care while fighting for patients' rights to express their own needs and adhere to cultural norms. Despite being difficult, ethical issues in nursing truly integrate the art of patient care. Nurses

must uphold the highest ethical standards for the benefit of their patients, their profession, and themselves. To review ethical issues, many organizations have established ethics boards. Every level of nurse practice should involve them in the ethics review of their chosen specialty. It is crucial to speak out in favor of patient care, patient rights, and practice ethics. The inclusion of ethics should start in nursing school and continue throughout the nurse's career.

The nursing profession as a whole, healthcare systems, and patient care are all greatly impacted by professional and ethical issues, which are of the utmost importance. Upholding ethical standards is crucial for preserving trust and ensuring patient safety because nurses play a crucial role in providing patients with compassionate and knowledgeable care. Overall, to fulfil their responsibilities as careers, advocates, and patient champions, nurses must uphold a strong commitment to moral and professional standards. Nurses can significantly improve healthcare outcomes and contribute to a moral and caring healthcare system by upholding these standards.

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