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THE RELATIONSHIP OF ETHICS EDUCATION AND MORAL SENSITIVITY AMONG UNDERGRADUATE NURSING STUDENTS

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Background: The nursing profession requires increasing competence of its practitioners at all levels. Competency among nurses cannot be achieved unless equipped with necessary moral sensitivity skills. Moral sensitivity is needed in protecting and promoting human health in uncertain, high degree of difficulty situations due to the nature of healthcare services. Nurses who have moral sensitivity skills can be trusted to act in ways that advance the interest of patients and could be made accountable for the practice. Therefore, how to best prepare students to deal with the ethical issues arise at work place is an important obligation of nursing education and research. There have been limited studies on the effects of ethics education on developing students' moral sensitivity.

Methods & Design: The study aimed at gaining an in-depth knowledge of the relationship of ethics education on nursing students' moral sensitivity. Students' perceptions of the relative value of the ethics study in their morals were also explored among other background factors. A non-probability, convenient sampling techniques was utilized for recruiting 419 nursing students from different level of the Bachelor program. A quantitative cross-sectional design was used; accordingly, data were collected at one point in a time. The Arabic version of the moral sensitivity questionnaire (A-MSQ) was used to measure moral sensitivity among participants. This instrument has excellent psychometric properties.

Results: Students' mean age was 21.27 ± 2.48 and GPA was 3.5 ± 0.64 . 44.15% of students studied ethics, 11.93% faced ethical dilemmas during their clinical practicum. Moral sensitivity mean score was 130.87 ± 16.99 for the total participants. Moral sensitivity mean score did not significantly differ between those who studied ethics and those who did not (132.61 ± 14.72 ; 129.46 ± 18.52 respectively). Patient centered caring, professional responsibility, and constructing

moral meaning was significantly different between the two groups (at $p < 0.001$). Experience of moral meaning experience moral dilemmas and conflicts, nurse-patient relationship, and experience of good deeds was similar across students regardless of the study of ethics course. Moral sensitivity was significantly different between students engaged in other ethics related learning activities ($p = .001$).

Conclusion: Ethics study among participants was influential on their patient centered caring, professional responsibility and constructing moral meaning aspects of their moral sensitivity. Despite total score for moral sensitivity was not affected by ethics course study, it did significantly differ among students who did and did not engage in other ethics related activities. Current findings should inform program and curriculum developers of the impact of incorporating ethics study in all components of nursing education including theory and practicum training. Future longitudinal studies are needed to explore moral sensitivity development among nursing students.

Biography

Hala Mohamed Mohamed Bayoumy, BScN, MScN, DScN is an Assistant Professor, King Saud Bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences. She is an author of many research articles (18) published in reputed journals. She has presented papers in numerous international conferences. She is in the Editorial Board of International Journal of Nursing & Clinical Practices. She was Editor for the special issue: Self Care Skills and Quality of Life of Patients - which was published under that journal. She is also a Reviewer for multiple journals and member of many academic bodies. Her research interests centers on advances in nursing education as well as exploring impact of different illness conditions, treatment modalities and nursing interventions.

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