

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

THE EFFECT OF NURSING ETHICAL TRAINING ON THE REINFORCEMENT OF NURSES' ROLE IN ETHICAL DECISION MAKING AT PRIVATE HOSPITALS IN MEDAN

Ali Sabela Hasibuan^{1*}, Jenny Marlindawani Purba² Roymond H. Simamora²

1 Student of the master in Nursing, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

2 Lecturer of Faculty of Nursing, Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

* Correspondence: alisabelahasibuan@gmail.com

Abstract

The advancement of nursing sciences and technologies has brought impacts to nurses in providing nursing interventions. It is common for nurses to face ethical dilemma and to make ethical decisions in order to overcome challenges in nursing intervention provision. Nurses are required to have adequate knowledge and competencies in taking ethical decision. This study aims to identify the effect of nursing ethical training on the reinforcement of nurses' role in ethical decision making. This study was a quasi-experimental research using non-equivalent control group design. The study was conducted at private hospitals in Medan City. The research samples involved 100 respondents who were divided into 2 groups, namely control group (n=50) and intervention group (n=50). The research instrument consisted of a set of questionnaire assessing the demographic data, knowledge, attitude, nurses' action, and observation. Mann-Whitney U test was performed in data analysis. The results show that nursing ethical training has an effect on the reinforcement of nurses' role in ethical decision making, including knowledge, attitude, and nursing intervention ($U=-3.40, p<0.01$; $U=-5.45, p<0.00$; and $U=-2.07, p<0.03$) between the control group and the intervention group.

Keywords: nursing ethical training, ethical decision making

International Journal of Nursing and Health Services (IJNHS), December 2019, Volume 2, Issue 4; Page 403-411

Received: 18 July 2019; Revised: 01 August 2019; Accepted: 15 August 2019

DOI 10.35654/ijnhs.v2i4.221

Introduction

Nursing interventions that is given by nurses to patients are always related to moral and human rights. Each patient has her or his rights to get the best healthcare services as well as protection and security during the medical treatment (1). However, in the real situation, nurses often face ethical dilemma in providing nursing intervention. One of the most common ethical dilemmas faced by nurses is to inform the patients their real medical condition (2).

Another problem faced by nurses is pregnancy among adolescents. On the one hand, it is mandatory for nurses to keep the confidentiality of patients' information. On the other

hand, nurses also believe that parents need to be informed about their children's condition (3).

In order to overcome these ethical dilemma issues, nurses should have adequate competencies in ethical decision making. However, nurses as a healthcare intervention executer have limited authority in making ethical decisions. The ethical decision making is determined by ethical principles (4). Ethical decision making is also affected by the doctor in charge, diagnosis, and patients' age. Doctor and nurses might have different ideas or decision in giving medical treatment to patients. For instance, the doctor decides to give further medical interventions, while nurses think to better stop the interventions, and vice versa (2). Previous studies showed that better medical results occur in patients when nurses are included in medical decision making. Nurses also find challenges when they need to make ethical decisions toward patients without clear personal information. On the one side, they need to give immediate intervention to help the patients, while on the other side; they also need to follow the regulations and procedures in the hospital where they work.

In order to get better understanding and competency in ethical decision making, it is necessary for nurses to join a nursing ethical training (5). Training is any kind of effort to improve worker's performance in a certain job. Education, training, and work motivation will influence work productivity (6). In ethical training, nurses will get to know ethical dilemma issues and be able to make ethical decisions.

Imelda Hospital is a type B private hospital in Medan City with the total number of nurses is 125. Based on an initial survey through interview, ward nurses reported that they faced ethical dilemmas, particularly they were about to give health education to patients, but the patients' family asked the nurses to keep the health status from the patients in a worry that the patients would lose their hope and affected their health condition. Another ethical dilemma found in the initial interview was faced by the nurses in emergency unit. They reported that it was dilemmatic to them when their fellow nurses asked them to prioritize their relative or family member who was newly admitted to the emergency unit.

Objective of the Study

The main objectives of this study were:

- 1) to analyze the nurses' attitude, knowledge, and action on their role in ethical decision making in private hospitals in Medan City.
- 2) to analyze the effect of nursing ethical training on nurses' role in ethical decision making in private hospitals in Medan City.

Research Method

This study was a quasi-experimental research with non-equivalent control group design. The study was conducted at Imelda General Hospital and Marta Friska Hospital in Medan City. There were 100 nurses participating as respondents in this study which were divided into 2 groups, namely control group (n=50) and intervention group (n=50). sampling technique was employed in selecting the samples. The data were collected using a set of questionnaire assessing respondents' demographic data, knowledge, attitude, and nurses' action in ethical decision making. The collected data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analyses using Mann Whitney U test with the confidence interval at 95% (n=50).

Results

Characteristic of respondents

Based on data in Table 1, the respondents in intervention group were majorly < 29 years of age (58.0%), dominantly woman (94.0%), with Islam as the predominant religion (44.0%), and had been working for 1-2 years (36.0%). On the other hand, the characteristics of respondents in control group were majorly <29 years of age (76.0%), dominated by woman (98.0%), with Islam and Catholic as the dominant religions (38.0% for each), and had been working for 1-2 years (40.0%).

Table 1. Frequency characteristic of respondents

Characteristics	Intervention Group (n=50)		Control Group (n=50)	
	F	%	F	%
Age:				
a. <29 years	29	58.0	38	76.0
b. >29 years	21	42.0	12	24.0
Gender:				
a. Man	1	2.0	3	6.0
b. Woman	49	98.0	47	94.0
Religion:				
a. Islam	22	44.0	19	38.0
b. Catholic	11	22.0	19	38.0
c. Protestant	16	32.0	12	24.0
d. Hindu	1	2.0	0	0.0
Education:				
a. Diploma 3 in Nursing	38	76.0	35	70.0
b. Bachelor in Nursing	12	24.0	15	30.0
Length of Work:				
a. 0-1 years	7	14.0	15	30.0
b. 1-2 years	18	36.0	20	40.0
c. 2-3 years	5	10.0	5	10.0
d. 3-4 years	5	10.0	3	6.0
e. 4-5 years	9	18.0	4	8.0
f. >5 years	6	12.0	3	6.0

Frequency knowledge, attitude, and action among respondents

Table 5 shows that respondents' knowledge in intervention group about ethical decision making before the ethical training was 74% for category 'good' and 26% for category 'adequate'. It can also be seen that the respondents predominantly had positive attitude (70.0%) in ethical decision making; only small number of nurses had negative attitude (30.0%). It was also found that the respondents at Martha Friska Hospital showed similar attitude in ethical decision making. The results showed that most of the respondents had a positive attitude (68.0%), while there was only small percentage of respondents who had negative attitude in ethical decision making (32.0%). In terms of action in ethical decision making, the results showed that the respondents' action in which the category is good was (70.0%) and less was (30.0%). On the other hand, in the control group, the percentage of good knowledge was 72.0%, positive attitude was 68%, and good attitude was 70.0%.

Table 2. Frequency knowledge, attitude, and action among respondents

Variable	Intervention Group (n=50)		Control Group (n=50)	
	f	%	F	%
Knowledge				
Good	37	74.0	36	72.0
Adequate	13	26.0	14	28.0
Attitude				
Positive	35	70.0	34	68.0
Negative	15	30.0	16	32.0
Action				
Good	35	70.0	35	70.0
Inadequate	15	30.0	15	30.0

Mean score difference of knowledge between the intervention group and control group

Based on the results from Mann-Whitney U calculation, it is found that the average value for knowledge in intervention group was MR=40.78. This value indicates that the score of the intervention group for knowledge is relatively higher than that of the control group. Therefore, it can be inferred that nursing ethical training affects nurses' knowledge in ethical decision making ($u=-3,404$; $p<0,01$).

Table 3. Mean score difference of knowledge between the intervention group and control group

Variable	Intervention Group		Control Group (n=50)		<i>u</i>	<i>p</i>
	(n=50)					
Knowledge	60.22	3011.00	40.78	2039.00	-3.404	0.001

MR = Mean Rank SR = Sum of Rank

Mean score difference of attitude between the intervention group and control group

The result from Mann Whitney calculation showed that the mean score of attitude in the intervention group was 66.14 and the control group was 34.86. From these values, it can be seen that the respondents in the intervention group had higher score than those in the control group. Therefore, it can be concluded that the nursing ethical training affects nurses' attitude in ethical decision making ($u=-5.459$, $p<0.01$).

Table 5. Mean score difference of attitude between the intervention group and control group

Variable	Intervention Group		Control Group (n=50)		<i>u</i>	<i>p</i>
	(n=50)					
Attitude	66.14	3307.00	34.86	1743.00	-5.459	0.000

MR = Mean Rank SR = Sum of Rank

Mean score difference of action between the intervention group and control group

Based on the calculation of Mann-Whitney test, it was resulted that the mean score of action in intervention group was 56.28 and the control group was 44.72. It indicates that the score of respondents in the intervention group for action variable is relatively higher than those in the control group. It can be inferred that the nursing ethical training had an effect on nursing action in ethical decision making ($u=-4,331$, $p<0,05$).

Table 6. Mean score difference of action between the intervention group and control group

Variable	Intervention Group		Control Group (n=50)		<i>u</i>	<i>p</i>
	(n=50)					
Action	56,28	2814,00	44,72	2236,00	-2,070	0,038

MR = Mean Rank SR = Sum of Rank

Discussion

The effect of nursing ethical training on nurses' knowledge in ethical decision making at private hospitals in Medan city

Training is an activity conducted to improve nurses' work performances, particularly in physical skills, intellectual skills, and management skills. As a professional, nurses are required to always follow the dynamic changes of healthcare services demand (7). Training is a process to teach employees certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes which will benefit the employees in completing their work and responsibilities in accordance with the ethical standard (8). A good training can widen employees' knowledge about the work culture and competitors, help the employees to acquire skills operating new technologies and to work in a team effectively (9).

A study conducted by Yulia (2010) (10) found that there was understanding changes in nurses about patients' safety after they participated in training. The mean score of nurses' understanding in the intervention group significantly increased after they joined a training. Tedjomuljo found that the knowledge level of nursing students about ethical code was good after they participated in an ethical training (11). Another study conducted by Dinck and Gorgulu about ethical training among nursing students in Turkey found that 85.7% of the students had an adequate understanding on nursing ethical code ICN and 83.7% of the students understood the ethical issues and dilemmas that mostly occurred in nursing practices (3). Similarly, a study conducted by Juliati in Pertamina Hospital in PangkalanBerandan, North Sumatera Province, Indonesia, in the year of

2014 found that if better and more trainings, particularly on nosocomial infection control, followed by the nursing students, the better the nurses' knowledge would be (12).

This study found that giving intervention of nursing ethical training to nurses could improve their knowledge about ethical decision making. Respondents' knowledge in the intervention group was found higher than that in the control group. There was an increase of mean score as much as 2.44 from 16.26 at the pretest became 18.70 at the posttest in the intervention group. Meanwhile, the mean score increase in the control group was only 1.50, from 15.50 at the pretest to 17.00 at the posttest. It can be concluded that despite the fact that both group showed increase in knowledge variable, the increase of knowledge in the intervention group is more significant than that in the control group.

The Effect of Nursing Ethical Training on Nurses' Attitude in Ethical Decision Making at Private Hospitals in Medan City

Attitude is the positive or negative feelings or individuals' mental state which is prepared, learned, and controlled by experiences, in which it gives an effect on their response to others, objects, and situations (13). According to Notoadmodjo, attitude is the condition of mental, nerves, and readiness of individuals that is controlled by experiences which gives dynamic or directive effects on individuals' responses towards objects and situation related to them. Moreover, Notoadmodjo suggests that one effort to change individuals' attitude toward certain object is through training (14).

A study by Purba, Emilia, and Rahayu (15) to nursing students of Palangkaraya Polytechnic of Health showed that caring as the affective competency of the students was higher after they participated in trainings. Similar result is also found by Ramadhani through a study in Yogyakarta. It was found that a training about home care service for malnourished babies to nurses at primary health center improve their attitude (16).

Training is aimed to improve the work performances of nurses to be able to achieve best performance which eventually improve the quality and work productivity, moral attitude, and professionalism of the nurses (8). Nurses' professionalism competency can be fostered and developed through sustainable training and education in nursing, not only in professional education, beginner, but also in bachelor level, conducting study visit to many model hospitals, and increase the frequency of discussion on case studies (17).

The study showed that the attitude of nurses in the intervention group was more positive after they had participated in nursing ethical training compared to the nurses in the control group. The mean score of respondents in the intervention group was 17.38%, while that of the control group was 14.48%. It was also found that all nurses who received training about nursing ethics had positive attitude (100%), while those who did not receive training had positive attitude as much as 78.0% and negative attitude as much as 22.0%. The attitude change that occurred after the training is because the nurses get information about nursing ethics during the training, so that the nurses who originally has negative attitude shift to have positive attitude. Besides, they also get more understanding on the importance of self-introduction before giving the intervention to patients, giving explanation of each nursing intervention, respecting patients' habits, assisting patients in fulfilling their needs, and keeping patients' privacy from others.

The Effect of Nursing Ethical Training on Nurses' Action in Ethical Decision Making at Private Hospitals in Medan City

Individuals' attitude is the function of their character (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) and the characteristics of their environment (18). In other words, one's action is determined by their character and the condition of their environment. Spitzberg proposes similar ideas as what Lewin proposes, that affective domain may affect the development of cognitive and psychomotor (19). This idea is also supported by the conditioning theory which states that attitude or affective learning process is the result of habitual activities (1). Staff training is often designed to improve their skills and work competencies through competence development in managing related programs and technical functional program. Training is also organized to improve worker's capabilities in accordance with their work areas (20).

The study conducted by Purba found that the competence of nursing students who received training on caring was relatively higher than those who did not participate in the training (15). Another study by Purwanto and Moordiningsih at PKU Muhammadiyah Hospital in Surakarta, found that nurses and paramedics at the hospital used decisive technique in ethical decision making, teamwork, and flexible type in accordance with the services in their unit, particularly in emergency unit (21). The results from study conducted by Purba and Puji Astute (22) which analyzed psychomotor skill of nurses also found that there was significant mean score change from the posttest between the intervention and control group. This finding is also supported by the argument from Dave in (23) stating that learning outcome or psychomotor training can be classified into 5 stages, namely imitation, manipulation, precision, articulation, and naturalization. It indicates that in order to master a certain skill, one needs to take some time and drillings. The training should be conducted repeatedly in order to give significant effect (22).

The objective of training is to improve work skills or nursing intervention in the workplace so that nurses are able to achieve the best performance which eventually improves the work quality and productivity, moral attitude and nurses' professionalism. It is necessary for nurses to regularly take training and other competency development program to train their psychomotor skill to fit the needs of their workplace. One skill that is necessary for a nurse to have is the ability to decide nursing intervention (8). Development of motivation, taking the attention of trainees to what is learned, helping participants to apply what they have learned, providing opportunities to practice new behaviors, and giving positive rewards to employee achievement are the objectives of the model developed in the form of training (23).

This study found that nursing ethical training may reinforce nurses' role in ethical decision making, particularly psychomotor skill (action). The results from the observation on nurses' action showed that there was mean score increase of nurses' action in ethical decision making among nurses in intervention group. Even though the intervention and control groups showed mean score increase in action variable, the increase in the intervention group was relatively higher than that in the control group. Nurses' action in ethical decision making is related to the relationship between nurses and patients, nurses and their workplace, nurses and society, nurses and their fellows, as well as nurses and profession association. Apparently, the content of the training is normally precise and target-based so that it is easy for the participants to remember and eventually increase the score of knowledge, attitude, and action of nurses in the intervention group. That training also gives

authentic instances related to nursing ethics which has become the main responsibility of nurses in hospitals.

This study also found that there were 4 nurses with lack of knowledge, 4 nurses with negative attitude, and 3 nurses with inadequate action. It is because the training is conducted after the office hour, so that some nurses particularly married nurses did not focus with the training. Besides, it was also found that some nurses perceived that the program was only for research and did not affect their career at the hospital, so that they probably did not show real performance when they were observed by the researcher and ward head nurse.

Conclusion

Nursing ethical training significantly affects the reinforcement of nurses' role including knowledge, attitude, and nurses' action in ethical decision making. By taking nursing ethical training, ward nurses are able to identify ethical dilemmas and able to explain the ethical decision making to the patients. Nurses also showed positive attitude on the ethical decision making and able to decide appropriate action in ethical decision making when they face ethical dilemma during nursing intervention provision to patients at the hospital.

References

- (1) Dinc L, & Gorgulu RS. (2002). *Teaching Ethics in Nursing: Nursing Ethics*. 9(3), 259-268.
- (2) Ebrahimi H, Nikraves M, Oskouie F, & Ahmadi F. Ethical behavior of nurses in decision-making in Iran. *Iranian Journal of Nursing and Midwifery Research*. 2015; 20(1), 147-155.
- (3) Silen, M., Tang, P. F., Wadensten, B., & Ahlstrom, G. Workplace distress and ethical dilemmas in neuroscience nursing. *The Journal of Neuroscience Nursing : Journal of the American Association of Neuroscience Nurses*. 2008;40(4), 222-231.
- (4) Mattison M. Ethical decision making: the person in the process. *Social Work*, 2000; 45(3), 201-212.
- (5) Riedel A, Riedel, & Annette. Sustainability as an Ethical Principle: Ensuring Its Systematic Place in Professional Nursing Practice. *Healthcare*. (2015); 4(1), 2.
- (6) Ose MI. Ethical Dilemma in Treating Hospice Patients at Emergency Installation. *Journal of Indonesian Nursing Education*. (2017); 3(2), 145.
- (7) Hasibuan M. (2013). *The Management of Human Resources*, 4th. Jakarta, Rineka Cipta.
- (8) Hasibuan M. (2013). *The Management of Human Resources*, 4th. Jakarta, Rineka Cipta.
- (9) Susihar. *The Effect of Caring Attitude on Nurses' Motivation and Patients' Satisfaction at In-patient Unit of Royal Progres Hospital in Jakarta*. (2011). Universitas Indonesia.
- (10) Mangkuprawira S. (2014). *Management of Strategic Human Resource*. Jakarta, Ghalia Indonesia.
- (11) Raymond A, Noe, John R, Hollenbeck, Barry G, & Patrick M. (2010). *Human Resource Management: Achieving Competetitive Excellence*, 1st Ed. Jakarta, Salemba Medika.
- (12) Yulia S. *The Effect of Patient Safety Training on Nurses' Understanding in Implementing Patients' Safety at Tugu Ibu Hospital in Depok*. (2010). Universitas Indonesia.
- (13) Tedjomuljo S, & Afifah E. Nursing Students' Knowledge Level about Profession Ethic Code and Caring. *Indonesian Nursing Journal*. (2016); 19(2), 129-137.
- (14) Juliati. The Relationship between Training and Work Performance of Nurses at Pertamedika Hospital in Pangkalan Brandan. *Jurkessutra*. 2015; 2(5), 1-13.

- (15) Azwar S. (2016). *Human Habits: Theory and Measurements*. Yogyakarta, Pustaka Pelajar.
- (16) Notoatmodjo S. (2016). *Health Promotion of Health Attitudes*. Jakarta, Rineka Cipta.
- (17) Purba MM, Emilia O, & Rahayu R. The Effect of Training in Caring on the Attitude in Giving Nursing Intervention among Nursing Students during Clinical Shift Changing at
- (18) Ramadhani A. The Effect of Home Care Training in Nurses on Nurses' Attitude in Performing Home care to Malnourished Children Under Five Years of Age in Yogyakarta. 2013.
- (19) Fahiqi MN. *The Relationship between Nurses and Nurse Professionalism in In-patient Units at Baladhika Husada Hospital in Jember*. (2016). Universitas Jember.
- (20) Sanjaya W. (2014). *Learning Strategies: Educational Process Standar Orientattion*. Jakarta, Kencana Pre Media.
- (21) Spitzberg B. Communication Competence as Knowledge, Skill and Impression. *Communication Education*. (1983); 32(1), 323-330.
- (22) Nooatmodjo S. (2014). *Human Resource Development, 1st Ed*. Jakarta, Rineka Cipta.
- (23) Purwanto Y, & Moordiningsih. The Attitude Dynamics in Decision Making among Nurses and Paramedic during Critical Condition. *Humanities Research Journal*, (2005); 691), 40-58.
- (24) Purba, J. M., & Pujiastuti, R. E. (2009). *Ethical Dilemma & Ethical Decision Making in the Practice of Mental Nursing*. Jakarta: EGC.
- (25) Arends R. (2012). *Learning to teach: learning to teach, 7th Ed*. Yogyakarta, Pustaka Pelajar.
- (26) Simamora, R. H. (2012). *Textbook: Nursing Management*. Jakarta: EGC