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Ethical Conflicts Experienced by Intensive Care Unit (ICU) Health Care Professionals in a Regional Hospital, Limpopo Province, South Africa

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Background: Conflicts arise when healthcare providers disagree about providing optimal care to critically ill patients where resources are constrained and services are constrained.

Purpose: The study investigated ethical conflicts experienced by ICU health care professionals working in a regional hospital, Limpopo Province of South Africa.

Methodology: The study adopted a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive design. The target population comprised of health professionals working in an intensive care unit of the regional hospital. Purposive sample was selected and 17 unstructured interviews were conducted. Tesch's method of data analysis was used. Ethical considerations were adhered to.

Results: Patients care needs were compromised due to the unavailability of beds and high technology equipment, such as well-functioning ventilators. Infection control practices were overlooked and "use once" pieces of equipment were re-used. Conflicting values between nurses, patients and family of patients exist.

Conclusion: Lack of resources compromises provision of optimal and intensive care. Patients were prone to infections and their safety might have been compromised.

Biography

A professional nurse, nurse educator and administrator focus on integrated nursing science and management in nursing.

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