



## Investigating the effect of teaching ethical codes on the performance of nurses in the hospital

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### Abstract

**Objective:** One of the shortcomings of hospitals is the non-observance of the principles of ethical codes by nurses in different wards, which also affects the performance of nurses towards patients. In this study, we investigate the effect of teaching ethical codes on the performance of nurses in different hospital wards. **Methods:** This study was conducted as a questionnaire. In this study, 50 nurses in different hospital wards and 50 patients in different hospital wards entered the study. Then the nurses involved in the study were trained in ethical codes and ethical principles for one month. Research data were analyzed using independent t-test, chi-square test. The results were considered significant  $p < 0.05$ . **Results:** The results of the intervention and control groups in patient rights and patients' satisfaction with nursing care were not significant and there is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the groups. **Conclusion:** Teaching ethical principles of nursing and performance appraisal in accordance with ethical codes is effective in improving the performance of nurses in different wards as well as patient satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Care, Hospital, Nurse, Professional Ethics, Standard

## Introduction

One of the complex challenges of nursing is the principled use of ethical codes in the nursing system in the face of patients, which has a great impact on the performance of nurses and patient satisfaction[1]. Therefore, these hospitals must always provide appropriate training programs. Principled patient care and respect for patients' rights lead to greater patient satisfaction, patient companions, and improved staff-patient relationships[2]. Also, the observance of ethical codes by nurses and hospital staff shows the professional commitment of nurses and staff. The quality index and effectiveness of health systems is the result of patients' direct satisfaction with nursing care, which is influenced by various factors such as how nurses treat patients and respect for patients' rights. Observance of ethical principles along with the clinical competence of nurses shows the quality of ethical care in the nursing profession[3,4]. The results of some research have shown that there are reports of inappropriate and unethical care, especially in dealing with elderly patients. The most appropriate way to ensure the observance of ethical principles in nursing is to teach codes and ethical principles periodically and as a curriculum in the nursing profession[5,6]. Given the daily encounters of nurses with ethical problems and challenges, it seems that commitment and adherence to professional ethical principles is an integral part of this profession. Teaching ethical codes is a powerful tool for solving problems arising from ethical challenges in nurses' work environment and as a result is very effective in patient satisfaction[7,8]. The results of studies have shown that nurses are not familiar enough with codes and ethical principles and do not consider themselves required to follow these ethical rules[9,10]. In one study, the results showed that nurses did not know enough about training in ethical codes, which led to dissatisfaction of patients in different wards. In a study, the results showed that holding workshops on principles and ethical codes for nurses has had fruitful results for patients and nurses. There are a variety of teaching methods for teaching codes in ethics, including lectures, workshops, seminars, distance learning. In such trainings, learners have a passive role in teaching that enables them to solve critical problems, acquire skills and make fair decisions and critical thinking. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of nursing ethics education.

## Methods

This study was a pilot study that was performed in 1399 in the emergency departments, pediatric adults and hemodialysis of Ali Ibn Abitaleb Hospital in Zahedan, Sistan and Baluchestan Province. For the study, 50 nurses in the mentioned wards were selected as the intervention group and 50 patients as the control group. The two groups were selected in terms of age, sex and degree of homogeneity. Inclusion criteria were nurses who had at least a bachelor's degree and had not participated in any nursing ethics workshop and were willing to participate in the nursing codes training workshop. Exclusion criteria were not attending workshop sessions for more than two sessions and not participating in training sessions. Data were collected using two questionnaires that were adjusted according to ethical codes and then analyzed by a standard scale set by the ethics committee of the Policy Council of the Ministry of Health. The scale of compliance with ethical codes consists of 30 items which address the domains of respect for patient rights (13 items: 1–7, 13, 15, 17, 24, 25, and 26), professional commitment (14 items: 8–12, 14, 16, 18–23, and 27), and improvement in quality of care (3 items: 28–30). In this study, 50 patients underwent a comparative test for two weeks. PSI is a standardized scale initially developed by Risser in 1975 for evaluation of patients' satisfaction with their nursing care. To measure the consistency of the patient satisfaction questionnaire, the researchers applied the test-retest method: the questionnaire was completed twice by the same 50 patients with a two week interval. The patient satisfaction questionnaire consists of 23 multiple-choice questions. For each question, there are 5 choices which

are scored from 1 to: always 5; often 4; occasionally 3; rarely 2; and never 1. First, the nurses were introduced to scenario-based education, group discussion, and the benefits of learning nursing ethical principles. Educational sessions were held in the conference hall of the hospital. The questionnaires were given to the patients of each of the nurses in the control and intervention groups. Educational intervention consisted of 4-hour sessions of education in ethical principles using clinical scenarios and group discussions. At each session, various ethical challenges were put forth and the participants discussed ways of dealing with them. The questionnaires were completed by the patients in the control and intervention groups immediately after and one month after intervention. Collected data were analyzed using statistical tests (t-test and chi-square) with a 95% confidence interval in SPSS v. 22. Significance level was set at  $p < 0.05$ . Research plan of the present study was approved by the ethics committee of the university. All the participants were informed about the objectives of the study. All the participants signed the informed consent form.

## Results Discussion

The results of the t-test showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between the pretest mean scores of the control and intervention groups in compliance with ethical codes from the patients' perspective. Compliance scores of the nurses in the intervention group were significantly higher than those of the control group as measured immediately after intervention from patients' perspective (Table 1). With regard to patients' level of satisfaction with nursing care, the results of the t-test showed that the difference between the pretest satisfaction mean scores of the two groups was not statistically significant. However, based on the results of the chi-square test, the control and intervention groups had significantly different satisfaction mean scores immediately after and one month after intervention: the satisfaction mean score of the intervention group as calculated immediately after intervention was significantly higher than that of the control group ( $p < 0.001$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) (Table 2). The results of the present study showed that there is a relationship and correlation between the level of teaching the principles and ethical codes of the nursing profession and patient satisfaction. It seems that nurses should receive quality education before graduation or during the internship. Training the necessary skills in the field of principles and ethical codes is effective in future career responsibility and improving human resources, and at the organizational level also improves the status, productivity and increase economic and social benefits. Many studies have been done in Iran and other countries. Schroeter et al [11]. In a study showed that there is a direct relationship between nurses' training and performance improvement of the nursing profession. The results of the study Liaschenko et al [12,13]. Showed that there is a correlation between professional ethics training courses and related conferences and improving the performance of nurses in different departments. In a study Tallis et al. Suggested that the content of the professional curriculum should be To change [14,15,16]. And it is necessary to teach professional ethics in dealing with undesirable cases. Arslantas et al. showed in their research that educational ethics is effective in increasing nursing students [17]. Milliken et al. showed that respect for patients' rights was more reported, while Van Der Zande M et al. In their study showed that the level of satisfaction with nurses was reported to be average [18,19].

Table 1: A comparison between the mean scores of the control and intervention groups in compliance with nursing ethical codes.

Group	Stage		
	before	after	p value
Intervention	64.56 $\pm$ 12.35	98.80 $\pm$ 11.73	<0.001
Control	88.06 $\pm$ 11.52	67.08 $\pm$ 5.47	0.272



Table 2: A comparison between the satisfaction mean scores of the control and intervention groups.

Group	Stage		p value
	before	after	
Intervention	47.16 ± 7.88	75.11 ± 10.6	<0.001
Control	46.49 ± 14.68	48.76 ± 5.14	0.319

### Conclusion:

Teaching ethical issues and their practical application in the workplace and in academic courses and service programs increases nurses' knowledge and skills needed for health care in hospitals, which is not only effective in ensuring mental security but also It can also accelerate the healing process of patients. Also, in order to increase the quality of educational methods in accordance with the standards of professional ethics, new methods and serious measures should be considered.

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