

Research on “Ethics of the Nurses’ Profession”, Financially Sponsored by Thailand Research Fund (TRF).

Associate Professor Dr. Wariya Chinwanno	Head of the Research Project entitled “Professional Ethics”
Associate Professor Dr. Manee Arpanantikul	Head of the Research Project entitled “Ethics of the Nurses’ Profession”
Associate Professor Supanee Senadisai	Researcher
Assistant Professor Pissamai or-rathai	Researcher
Dr.wanna prapaipanich	Researcher

Abstract

The purpose of this study were to collect, analyze, compare, and relate the nursing profession’s ethical frameworks existing in Thailand, to study ethics in nursing profession as perceived by Thai nurses, to study ethical problems in nursing profession being found in Thailand and their impacts on clients, to study mechanism/guidelines to solve problems related to ethics in nursing profession, and to study ways to prevent nursing profession’s ethical problems. Data were collected from literature reviews, quantitative data from 1,500 registered nurses through questionnaires, and qualitative data from interviewing 30 nurse administrators and nursing lecturers. Data analyses were done by using descriptive statistics and content analysis.

The results showed that when synthesizing the nursing profession’s ethical frameworks existing in Thailand, ten important nursing ethics in nursing practice were identified, that is, 1) respect for autonomy, 2) beneficence, 3) nonmaleficence /do no harm, 4) justice, 5) veracity, 6) fidelity, 7) advocacy, 8) accountability/responsibility, 9) cooperation, and 10) caring. For ethics in nursing profession as perceived by Thai nurses, it was found that most nurses rated the importance of ethics in nursing profession as they really perceived in the highest level which the first three ranks were as follows: 1) do not practice/do not support the illegal practice or to do nursing malpractice, medical malpractice, or public health malpractice (80.7%), 2) provide nursing care with regard to patients’ or clients’ safety (79.9%), and 3) do not refuse to help crisis persons from illness when being asked for help and in the status of being able to help others (78.6%). Regarding ethics in nursing profession nurses could perform in real nursing practice, most nurses rated 3 practical nursing ethics with the highest level respectively as follows: 1) do not practice/do not support the illegal practice or to do nursing malpractice, medical malpractice, or public health

malpractice (61.6%), 2) do not deceive patients or clients to misunderstand for nurses' benefits (60.3%), and 3) provide nursing care with regard to patients' or clients' safety (57.2%).

The findings of qualitative data revealed ten ethics in nursing profession that the majority of nurses still usually practice including 1) patient advocacy, 2) fidelity, 3) kindness to patients, 4) helping without expecting anything in return, 5) having discipline, 6) devoting, 7) having good service behaviors and good service mind, 8) justice, 9) responsibility, and 10) confidentiality. In terms of ethical problems in nursing profession being found in Thailand which were discovered in a few nurses, they consisted of nine issues: 1) opening non-standard nursing program, 2) doing nursing practice without standard, 3) ineffective communication, 4) having inappropriate service behaviors, 5) non-standard health care service center, 6) disclosing patients' data, 7) deceitfulness in working, 8) performing duties with nonprofessional standard, and 9) having proper conduct. When considering direct impacts on clients, it showed four main points: 1) patients received non-standard nursing care, 2) patients had complications or unwanted symptoms, 3) patients spent too much money on treatment, and 4) patients may have lethal effects. For mechanism/guidelines to solve problems related to ethics in nursing profession, it reflected three themes: 1) the head nurse summoned up a nurse, 2) assisting when ethical problems in nursing profession occurring, and 3) hospital risk management. Concerning ways to prevent nursing profession's ethical problems, the results showed thirteen issues containing: 1) strictly investigating the nursing educational institutions and health care service institutions, 2) holding on the role model principle, 3) not helping persons who made moral mistakes or to be dishonest, 4) carrying out standard nursing care, 5) developing nursing guidelines, 6) providing supervisor system, 7) providing knowledge related to nursing ethics through various methods, 8) developing nurses' potential in trans cultural care, 9) evaluating nurses' working outcomes from in- and out-evaluators, 10) developing communication skills, 11) following up and evaluating sporadically, 12) praising, admiring, and rewarding, and 13) arranging adequate nursing manpower.

From this study, it indicates that nursing profession should have ethics in performing nursing practice because nursing is a profession directly related to human life. Carrying out nursing practice without ethics would lead to harmfulness for clients. It is essential to have the management to regulate nurses in keeping ethics in nursing profession continuously in order to prevent ethical problems.

Keywords registered nurses, ethical problems in nursing profession, guidelines to solve ethical problems in nursing profession, ways to prevent nursing profession's ethical problems