

# “CORRELATION OF MORAL DISTRESS AND MORAL SENSITIVITY OF NURSES WITH SAFE NURSING CARE”

## Background

Moral distress is the situation in which healthcare professionals and nurses know the moral principles that should guide their actions but are not allowed by the constraints of the health system in which they work [1, 2]. Nurses, often face moral challenges that lead them to moral distress, as they must make difficult life-or-death decisions for their patients [3]. Moral sensitivity is the ability of nurses to perceive the moral dimensions of certain situations or actions. Safe care is a range of services provided to individuals/patients or societies, by health professionals and consequently nurses with the aim of monitoring, promoting, maintaining or restoring the health of patients. Moral impasse negatively affects safe health care. Moral sensitivity has generally been touted as the solution to moral distress.

## Aim(s)

The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between both moral distress and moral sensitivity of nurses with safe nursing care.

## Methods

A total of 163 Registered nurses from a Greek General Hospital participated in the research. The study included the Moral Resilience (RMRS), Safety Attitudes: Frontline Perspectives from this Patient Care Area, Moral Impasse (MMD-HP) and Moral Sensitivity Control (Byrd's NEST) scales.

## Results

For the RMRS scale, higher scores are recorded for the moral efficacy dimension. Moderate scores are recorded for the MMD-HP scale, so health professionals are characterized by moderate moral sensitivity. Nurses answering Byrd's NEST scale are characterized by moderate moral sensitivity. Research shows that the greater the integrity of the relationships, the greater the reactions to moral adversity. The greater the moral distress, or the better the perceptions of the security offered by management, the greater nurses' personal integrity. As relational integrity or the moral distress measure decreased, moral efficacy increased. The higher the moral distress of the nurses, the greater the integrity of the relationships. Nurses who had children also felt more secure about working conditions than those who did not. The greater the dynamics of the clinic, the less reactions to moral adversity. Finally, greater moral distress was associated with both greater personal integrity and greater relational integrity, and less moral efficacy.

## Discussion

Increased ethical sensitivity prevents the occurrence of ethical impasses and has a positive effect on the provision of safe health care. Moral sensitivity leads to moral resilience which is the antidote to moral dilemmas and ensures safe nursing care.

### Implications and future perspectives

Low number of participants in this research study prevents us from generalization of our results. Future research should be done in other hospital settings as well.

## References

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