



# Perspectives of Patients' Dignity in Nursing Education

Dr. Georgios Efstathiou, Dr. Evridiki Papastavrou  
Department of Nursing, Cyprus University of Technology



# Dignity

Respect of human dignity an important element of many national and international nursing ethical codes

Nurses have four fundamental responsibilities: to promote health, to prevent illness, to restore health and to alleviate suffering. The need for nursing is universal.

Inherent in nursing is respect for human rights, including cultural rights, the right to life and choice, to dignity and to be treated with respect. Nursing care is respectful of and unrestricted by considerations of age, colour, creed, culture, disability or illness, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, politics, race or social status.

## ΕΘΝΙΚΟΣ ΚΩΔΙΚΑΣ

### Άρθρο 2: Η σχέση του Νοσηλευτή με τα άτομα

Η πρωταρχική επαγγελματική ευθύνη του Νοσηλευτή είναι η παροχή υπηρεσιών φροντίδας στα άτομα. Κατά την άσκηση του έργου του ο Νοσηλευτής προάγει ένα περιβάλλον φροντίδας που σέβεται τα ανθρώπινα δικαιώματα, τις αξίες, τις συνήθειες και τις θρησκευτικές πεποιθήσεις του ατόμου, της οικογένειάς του καθώς και της κοινότητας στην οποία ανήκει.

- ✦ Ο Νοσηλευτής παρέχει φροντίδα με γνώμονα τα συμφέροντα του ατόμου όσον αφορά στην πρόληψη, στη θεραπεία και στην αποκατάσταση της υγείας του.
- ✦ Ο Νοσηλευτής παρέχει ποιότητα φροντίδας χρησιμοποιώντας τις επιστημονικές και επαγγελματικές του γνώσεις, δεξιότητες και εμπειρίες.
- ✦ Ο Νοσηλευτής φροντίζει τον ασθενή με αξιοπρέπεια και με ανάλογο σεβασμό προς τις πολιτισμικές του αξίες.
- ✦ Ο Νοσηλευτής παρέχει ισότιμη φροντίδα, επιμέλεια και αφοσίωση προς όλα τα άτομα ανεξάρτητα από τις δικές του πεποιθήσεις.

# Dignity

Vaguely defined in nursing

- Preserve
- Maintain
- Respect

Many studies exploring the content of patient dignity as perceived by patients or nurses

**no studies among nursing students**



# Nursing students

Important to increase the knowledge on how students feel about dignity so as to design more appropriate teaching strategies especially concerning specific actions that show respect of patient dignity



# Aim

To explore nursing students' perceptions on dignity through their experiences during nursing education (clinical placement)

# Method

## Focus group study (4 group discussions)

- Nursing students of the CUT (N=34)
- Each group consisted of students from the same year of studies, similar age
- Different clinical placements
- Moderator to facilitate discussions
- Open for exchange of ideas
- Thematic content analysis

# Ethical considerations

- Study's protocol reviewed by the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee
- Ethical standards described by Beauchamp and Childress (2009)
- Participants informed on the study (right to refuse participation, withdraw, verbal informed consent etc)



# Results

Many factors that may compromise (violate) patients' dignity

## Themes

- Nurse-patient interaction
- Patient's characteristics
- Nurse's characteristics

# Results

- Nurse-patient interaction

## Information

«the patient has the right to know [...] the nurse needs to inform...»

«the nurse must explain»

«I will provide as much information as possible»

«the patient was not informed, therefore he left his room...»

«the patient wanted to be informed on the procedure, nevertheless nobody provided such information»

# Results

- Nurse-patient interaction

## Talking to the patient

«... the way we talk to the patient. It is different to call him *Georgie* and different to call him Mr. George»

«we don't call the patients as Mr. Michalis, Mr Kostas but rather Hey Kostas»

«the way nurses talk to the patients for example granny, honey...»

«where is the appendicitis?»

«I cannot say 6A meaning a patient, he has a name»

# Results

- Nurse-patient interaction

## Privacy

«...you need to close the curtains to give a bed bath»

«... there are cases when nurses do not close the curtains [...] and there are other patients and visitors looking»

«nurses were coming in and out of the patients' rooms without even closing the door and at the same time we were giving bed baths»

# Results

- Nurse-patient interaction

## Personal data/confidentiality

«...the nurse was shouting about the patient's treatment  
{ *I have inserted a catheter you may pass urine now* }»

«has the patient given the right to the nurse to shout  
about the medications he receives or about the  
treatment? »

# Results

- Nurse-patient interaction

## Patient's will

«...this patient had a fear for injections [...] the nurse insisted on doing the injection. He did not respect the patient's fear on injections»

«...you look inexperienced in drawing blood , let somebody else to do it. And the nurse replied you cannot judge me, let me do my job»

«...the nurse was shouting you will have a bath now»

# Results

- Nurse-patient interaction

## Patient's will

«...the patient has the right to refuse»

«...I will explain to her about the benefits of the treatment but I cannot force her to accept it»

«...you cannot do anything on a patients body without his/her permission»

# Results

- Patient's characteristics

## Need for help / inability of self care

«...to accept that nurses will provide care to them, something that they used to do before their admission to the hospital»

«... to need help for a bath»



# Results

- Patient's characteristics

## Perception on hospital admission

«At home the patients had more comforts, they did what they wanted to do, now in the hospital they share the place with other people»

«The patient may not feel as important as at home»

«The patient may feel incapable, he cannot work, he cannot raise his children...»

# Results

- Patient's characteristics

## Nationality

«...this foreigner patient. One nurse was expecting some other nurse to give this patient a bed-bath. At the end nobody did. Nobody wanted to give a bed bath to this patient»

«...muslims do not eat pork, I have to respect this»

# Results

- Nurse's characteristics

## Age

«...younger nurses are more careful concerning the respect of the privacy and dignity of the patients»

«...the curtains during bed bath, I see younger nurses to use them more often»

# Results

- Nurse's characteristics

## Psychological status

«... the nurse may not feel well that day»

«... personal problems, for example with children, wife, money. It is not always possible to leave this behind»

# Conclusion



Patient dignity can be violated (as perceived by nursing students) – in line with previous studies

## Nursing students

- recognised cases of violated patient dignity
- recognised the importance of maintaining patient dignity

# Implications



Nursing students are the future nurses (as health care professionals)

- educators need to understand what students believe
- educators need to tailor programmes to promote the respect of patient dignity

Policy makers and nursing leaders need to understand the value of respecting patient dignity as a means for enhancing the quality of care provided and patient satisfaction

# Thank You

