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THE MORAL SENSITIVITY OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

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Objective: In this study, it is aimed to determine the moral sensitivity levels of all nursing and midwifery students who are studying in first and fourth grade students in a faculty of health sciences at Kocaeli University.

Methods: This study is a descriptive study. The research population was composed of students studying in the first and fourth year of midwifery and nursing at Kocaeli University. 'Sociodemographic characteristics of the students' developed by researchers, the scala developed by Kim Lutzen and adapted by Rhonda W. Comrie's for nursing students, Turkish validity and reliability was done in 2015 by Yılmaz Şahin et al "The moral sensitivity scale" was used. The data obtained from the application were evaluated in the SPSS 20 program.

Results: The average value of the moral sensitivity scale was found to be 4.75, indicating that they were neither ethically sensitive nor insensitive. While the score of orientation of women was higher than that of men, the score of ethical dilemma was higher in males than females. The interpersonal orientation score of the midwifery senior students was found lower than the nursing senior students. In the first grade, nursing students experienced more ethical dilemmas and were found helpful.

Conclusion: The neutrality of the students' moral sensitivity score suggests the possibility of not being aware of the ethical dilemmas. For this reason, the ethical dilemma during their training should be made more aware of their decision-making mechanisms, roles and responsibilities when compared with ethical dilemmas.

Keywords: Moral, sensitivity; moral sensitivity, nursing, midwifery, student

Expanded Abstract

Introduction and The Aim of This Study

This study aims to determine the moral sensitivity of the all the first- and fourth-year nursing and midwifery students of Kocaeli University Health Sciences School.

Method

This is a descriptive study. The population of the study consisted of the first- and fourth-year nursing and midwifery students of Kocaeli University Health Sciences School. There were 388 first- and fourth-year

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students in total and 85% of them participated in the study. The study was conducted between April 27 and June 4 in 2017. The objective of the study was explained at the beginning of the questionnaire and it was carried out with the students participating in the study. In the study, "socio-demographic characteristics of the students scale" developed by the researchers and "ethical sensitivity in nursing students scale" developed by Kim Lutzen¹, adopted for the nursing students by Rhonda W. Comrie and whose Turkish validity and reliability was approved by Yılmaz Şahin et al.¹³ in 2015 were applied. This is a seven-point likert scale and the expressions are evaluated between 1 point - strongly disagree and 7 point - completely agree. While high point shows ethically high sensitivity, low point indicates ethically low sensitivity and the total point that can be obtained varies between 30 and 210. The point average of the scale 7-5.9 is considered as quite important, 5.8-5 is considered important, 4.9-3.1 is considered as neutral and less than 3.1 is seen as unimportant. Permissions were obtained from the dean of health sciences and the Ethics Committee of Research and Application Hospital of Kocaeli University for the study. The participants are told not to write their names down and leave the questionnaire form in a closed box after completing with the aim of ensuring the confidentiality. The data obtained from the application were evaluated in the SPSS 20 program.

Results and Discussion

82.3% of the participants were 19-23, 89% of them were female and more than half (61%) were nursing students. According to the ethical sensitivity scale findings, the point average was found as 4.75. This value shows that the students were at a middle level in terms of ethics (4.9-3.1 middle level). In other words, it was observed that they were neither sensitive nor insensitive. The participants obtained the highest point (5.67) in the sub-dimension "interpersonal orientation", the lowest point (3.61) in the sub-dimension "experience of ethical dilemma" in the ethical sensitivity scale. There were statistically significant differences between the point averages obtained in the gender, departments, graduated high schools from which they were graduated, employment status and class which were among the sub-dimensions of the scale. There was a significant difference between interpersonal orientation and ethical dilemma depending on the gender (relatively $p=0.013$; $p=0.003$). The point average of interpersonal orientation was higher among females, the point average of ethical dilemma experience was higher among males. A significant difference was observed between the point averages of sub-dimensions ethical dilemma experiences and helpfulness according to the departments. The point average of the ethical dilemma and helpfulness was higher than midwifery students (relatively 11.17 ± 3.480 , 37.97 ± 6.238). A statistically significant difference was found between the point averages of the ethical dilemma experiences according to the high schools from which they were graduated ($p=0,047$), while the ethical dilemma point average of Anatolian high school graduates was higher (11.31 ± 3.539). It was observed that a significant difference existed between the point averages of employment status and interpersonal orientation. It was detected that the points of the employees were higher (24.73 ± 2.375) ($p=0.01$). There was not a significant difference between the point average of their classes and interpersonal orientation of the students. The interpersonal orientation point of the senior midwifery students was lower ($p<0.01$). The students most agreed to "Having information about the general status of the patient is my duty as a nurse" (75.3%) and least agreed to "I fulfill the request of the doctor even if the patient refuses receiving the treatment when it is difficult" (18.3%).

The orientation point of the senior midwifery students was found to be less than the senior nursing students. The first-year nursing students had more ethical dilemma experiences and found to be more helpful.

Conclusion

The fact that the students had middle point in the ethical sensitivity leads to thinking that they may not be aware of ethical dilemmas. Therefore, the students should be more conscious about ethical dilemma, decision making mechanisms when they face ethical dilemma and their roles and responsibilities. While doing this, cultural and personal characteristics that may influence their ethical sensitivity should be taken into consideration.

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