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Title

What the Nurse does

Exploring the nurses contribution to the resolution of ethical dilemmas in secondary care - the pilot study

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Abstract

Introduction

Nurses face ethical dilemmas as part of their professional practice and it is often these that cause the greatest concern for the patient, their family and the nurse (Storch 2004, DH,1999) . It is therefore important that we are able to understand what registered nurses contribute to addressing these dilemmas as they occur.

Aim of the study

The aim of this pilot study is to test the data collection methods for a study in order to examine what it is that Registered Nurses contribute to the resolution of ethical dilemmas as part of their nursing practice.

Methods

This is a qualitative study using audio recording of semi-structured interviews to collect narrative data from participants (Polit and Beck 2006). A two phased analysis was undertaken a thematic approach, followed by a narrative analysis to examine the cultural dimensions within the clinical setting (Burns and Grove 2001).

Results

Questions required minor amendments and three themes emerged from the data:

- Organisational priorities
- Nurse – physician relationship
- 'Best for the patient'

Discussion incl. Conclusion

Participants identified and discussed conflicts that have arisen between organisational objectives, procedures or protocol and that which was thought to be 'best for the patient'.

Practical relevance

This pilot study highlighted the importance of developing the appropriate interviewing skills required for data collection and appropriate wording of questions to illicit the required data from participants prior to undertaking major study

Research implications

Three key areas identified by registered nurses in relation to ethical dilemmas where further research would be beneficial.

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