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VIOLETIONS AND ETHICAL INCIDENTS COMMITTED BY NURSING PROFESSIONALS: AN INTEGRATIVE REVIEW

INFRAÇÕES E OCORRÊNCIAS ÉTICAS COMETIDAS PELOS PROFISSIONAIS DE ENFERMAGEM: REVISÃO INTEGRATIVA

VIOLACIONES E OCURRENCIAS ÉTICAS COMETIDAS POR PROFESIONALES DE ENFERMERÍA: UNA REVISIÓN INTEGRADORA

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ABSTRACT

Objective: analyzing the national and international scientific literature about violations and ethical events in nursing. **Method:** an integrative review of the literature in order to answer the research question << *What has been published in national and international level about ethical violations and ethical events committed by nursing professionals?* >>. The search was conducted in MEDLINE, BDNF, LILACS, PUBMED, Cochrane and Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations, from 2003 to 2013. **Results:** 146 studies met; from these, there were selected seven, in which the main events and ethical violations concerned the iatrogenic and the conflicting professional relationships. **Conclusion:** the bioethical principles violated were the non-maleficence and beneficence. It was evident the lack of national and international scientific literature on the subject. Therefore, the emphasis in this type of study has been working with both the formation and the practice of nursing professionals in compliance with the ethical and legal standards. **Descriptors:** Nursing; Ethical Codes; Professional Ethics; Nursing Laws.

RESUMO

Objetivo: analisar a produção científica nacional e internacional a respeito de infrações e ocorrências éticas na enfermagem. **Método:** uma revisão integrativa da literatura com vistas a responder a questão de pesquisa << *O que se tem publicado em âmbito nacional e internacional a respeito de infrações e ocorrências éticas cometidas pelos profissionais de enfermagem?* >>. A busca foi realizada nas bases de dados MEDLINE, BDNF, LILACS, PUBMED, Cochrane e Biblioteca Digital de Teses e Dissertações, no período de 2003 a 2013. **Resultados:** encontraram-se 146 estudos; desses, foram selecionados sete, nos quais as principais ocorrências e infrações éticas referiam-se às iatrogenias e às relações profissionais conflituosas. **Conclusão:** os princípios bioéticos violados foram o da não maleficência e o da beneficência. Evidenciou-se a escassez de produção científica nacional e internacional sobre o assunto. Por isso, a ênfase na realização desse tipo de estudo vem colaborando tanto com a formação quanto com a prática dos profissionais de enfermagem, em observância às normas éticas e legais. **Descritores:** Enfermagem; Códigos de Ética; Ética Profissional; Legislações de Enfermagem.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: analizar la literatura científica nacional e internacional acerca de violaciones y eventos éticos en enfermería. **Método:** es una revisión integradora de la literatura con el fin de responder a la pregunta de investigación << *Lo que se ha publicado en el plano nacional e internacional acerca de violaciones éticas y eventos éticos cometidos por los profesionales de enfermería?* >>. La búsqueda se realizó en MEDLINE, BDNF, LILACS, PubMed, Cochrane y la Biblioteca Digital de Tesis y Disertaciones, de 2003 a 2013. **Resultados:** 146 estudios cumplieron; de estos, siete fueron seleccionados, en la que los principales eventos y violaciones éticas refieren a las iatrogenias e a las relaciones profesionales conflictivas. **Conclusión:** los principios de la bioética violados fueron el de la no maleficencia y el de la beneficencia. Era evidente la falta de literatura científica nacional e internacional acerca del tema. Por lo tanto, el énfasis en este tipo de estudio viene trabajando tanto con la formación y la práctica de los profesionales de enfermería, en el cumplimiento de las normas éticas y legales. **Descriptor:** Enfermería; Códigos de Ética; La Ética Profesional; Leyes de Enfermería.

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INTRODUCTION

Nursing is a profession that has as essence the care for the human being, whether individually, in family and/or in the community, being the nursing staff composed of nurse, nursing technician, nursing assistant and midwife.^{1,2} And for the exercise of nursing is essential the development of skills linked to ethical and legal standards, in order to ensuring the safety of the person assisted, extending the assistance free from risks and damage, preventing ethical occurrences and violations^{2,3}.

According to the Code of Ethics of Nursing Professionals (CEPE), Chapter V, Article 113, ethical breach is "the action, omission or collusion involving disobedience and/or non-compliance with the provisions in the code".^{2:10} And "responds for the wrongdoing who commit or compete for its practice, or from it get benefit, when committed by others."^{2:10} In cases where there is evidence of ethics violations it should be referred to disciplinary analysis in the Regional Council of Nursing where the Professional is registered.³

Although the ethical violation is considered the violation of article of CEPE, by COREN/COFEN system analysis, also finds in the literature the term ethical occurrence,³⁻⁸ which is used to describe harmful events, caused by nursing professionals, which were reviewed by the Ethics Committee in Nursing (EEC). It is appropriate to mention that, according to the Law n° 5,905 of July 12nd, 1973, the Act of overseeing compliance with the ethical and legal standards of nursing care rests with the Federal Council of nursing care (COFEN) and the regional councils of nursing (COREN)⁹. To fulfill this mister, one of the legal instruments used is the CEPE.

The CEPE determines that the activities performed by nursing professionals should be based on respect for life, dignity and human rights.² Therefore, it is the duty of each member of the nursing staff have science and practice its content, especially noting the obligations, prohibitions and rights relating to professional practice, ensuring the promotion, protection, recovery of health as well as the rehabilitation of the person.

With respect to general legislation, the Penal Code, in its article 21, states that "ignorance of the law is inexcusable. The error about unlawful the fact, if inevitable, without penalty; if avoidable, may decrease one-sixth to one-third".^{10:14} In the sole paragraph of the same article is considered "preventable error if the agent acts or omits without consciousness awareness".^{10:14} It should be

noted that it is vital the nursing professionals having knowledge of the legal norms governing society, not only those of nursing, both for the development of its assistance action show much teaching, managerial, or research, since nobody can claim ignorance of the law, seeking to avoid liability.¹¹

About CEPE, this provides a social contract with the society serving as ethical and legal orientation, since it establishes parameters for performance of nursing staff, contained in chapters that discuss relationships and professional confidentiality, rights, responsibilities, duties and prohibitions related to teaching, research, scientific and technical production, as well as rights, responsibilities and duties relating to advertising, the types of infringements and the penalties that are subject of nursing team professionals.^{2,12-14}

In this sense and taking the relevance of the subject, it is assumed that the study of ethical infractions committed by nursing professionals is relevant, whereas such situations have been experienced increasingly, as disclosed by the media and the results may subsidize both the nursing education as professional legal and safe performance.

The confrontation, and in particular, the prevention of infractions or ethical occurrences represent a challenge for nursing, and, when it comes to a theme central to the quality of care is essential to the achievement of further research, given that such information should be part of everyday life of nursing staff, thus providing, allowances for there to be discussions on the practical activities carried out daily to the ethical conduct adopted by these professionals.

In this study, we sought to analyze national and international publications dealing with ethical infractions, and those that address the ethical incidents committed by nursing professionals.

METHOD

Study on integrative literature review mode about the ethical violations and instances in nursing ethics, held in the period from February to June 2013. The research was driven by six steps: (1) identification of the theme and selection of the guiding question; (2) establishment of criteria for inclusion and exclusion; (3) definition of information of studies; (4) evaluation of the studies included in the review; (5) interpretation of results; (6) synthesis of knowledge.¹⁵

First stage: identification of the theme and selection of the guiding question: it is

considered that the subject of this review is clear and the arguments presented have allowed glimpses of a knowledge gap about the anxieties that the subject awakens, demanded ask: *what has been published in national and international scope, the respect of ethical violations and ethical incidents committed by nursing professionals?*

Second stage: establishment of criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Inclusion criteria were: publications in national and international journals; theme of ethical violations and/or occurrence within the nursing ethics; languages in Portuguese, English and Spanish, with complete texts of public availability; published in the period from 2003 to 2013. Exclusion criteria for this proposal for study were: repeated articles in more than one database, which were considered only once, editorials, and studies that despite performing the selected terms, went out the guiding question.

Data collection occurred in the following databases: Medical Literature Analysis and Retrival System Online (MEDLINE), database of nursing (BDENF), Latin American literature and Caribbean Health Sciences (LILACS), National Library of Medicine (PUBMED), Cochrane and Digital Library of Electronic Theses and dissertations (BDTD). No descriptors for the terms, infringement ethics and ethical, so for instance search on MEDLINE, LILACS and BDENF used the terms "ethical violations" and "ethical" instances, plus the Boolean AND expression, followed by the descriptor "nursing". On PUBMED was used the term "occurrence in nursing ethics" and Cochran used the descriptors "ethics" AND "nursing".

Third stage: defining the information to be extracted from selected studies. To respond to questioning the research was chosen as instrumento16 a form that captures information regarding article ID, origin, language, year of publication, data from the authors, title of the work, the study

population, purpose, type of occurrence and/or ethical infraction, methodological description, level of evidence and main results, being these the variables of the study.

The objective of this step was to organize and categorize the information, developing a database. Also sought to Identify the studies of agreements with the levels: (I) systematic reviews or meta-analysis of relevant clinical trials; (II) randomized trial; (III) clinical trial without randomization; (IV) cohort studies and case-control; (V) systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies; (VI) a single descriptive or qualitative study; (VII) the opinion of a Committee of experts¹⁶.

Fourth stage: evaluation of the studies included in the integrative review and critical analysis, pointing out the levels of evidence¹⁶.

Fifth stage: held the interpretation and discussion of the results, highlighting studies that showed occurrences and ethical violations present in nursing.

Sixth stage: review and synthesis of the knowledge produced about occurrences and ethical infractions committed by nursing professionals.

The findings were presented in a descriptive and illustrated in figures.

RESULTS

The automatic search made possible the location of 146 studies, of these 61 in BDTD, 40 in, PUBMED, 16 in LILACS, 18 in BDENF, 0 in MEDLINE and 11 in Cochrane. However, 115 not addressed the proposed theme, 11 repeated in more than one database, 08 were not available in their entirety, 03 did not belong to the area of nursing, and 02 were not within the stipulated period. Thus, upon examination based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, obtained seven publications, as shown in Figure 1.

Number	Origin	Language	Year of publication	Author
1	LILACS. Brazilian Nursing Magazine	Portuguese	2003	Author: Freitas e Oguisso ⁴
2	LILACS. Latin-american Nursing Magazine	English	2012	Schneider e Ramos ¹⁷
3	BDTD. Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Medicine of the USP	Portuguese	2013	Penna ¹⁸
4	LILACS. Nursing School Magazine USP	Portuguese	2008	Freitas e Oguisso ⁷
5	BDTD. Master thesis submitted to the school of nursing of the University of São Paulo	Portuguese	2008	Silva ¹⁹

6	PUBMED. BMC Medical Ethics	English	2013	Pegueroles, Olmos ²⁰
7	PUBMED. Journal of Advanced Nursing	English	2010	Ulrich, Taylor, Soeken, O'Donnell, Farrar e Danis ²¹

Figure 1. Characterization of selected studies (n = 7), according to the source, language and year of publication and the author, Campo Grande, 2014.

The data shows that there are several studies addressing the topic, because ethical infractions and occurrences are being discussed and studied in graduate programs, which denotes the growing interest by the scientific community. This fact also evidenced by increase of publications in the last 5 years, in increasing proportion, given the range of 5 years between the first publication found

(2003) and the second (2008); between the latter and the next (2008/2010/2012) for 2 years and yearly thereafter. Most publications (06) are after the publication of the resolution 311/2007 that it has approved the new CEPE.²

Information regarding the title of the work, the studied population and objectives are illustrated in Figure 2.

Job title	The studied population	Objective
Occurrences in nursing ethics . ⁴	114 occurrences ethics practiced by nursing professionals of a hospital in the city of São Paulo.	Characterizing the nursing professionals involved in ethical occurrences and identifying the causes of these occurrences.
Nursing ethical processes in the State of Santa Catarina: Characterization of factual elements. ¹⁷	208 complaints and ethical processes 128-professionals completed.	Analyzing the factual elements present in ethical processes, completed and filed in Coren/SC, during the period from 1999 to 2007.
Analysis of the relationship between the conduct of professional nurses, technicians and nursing assistants with the professional ethical processes next to Coren SP. ¹⁸	189 ethical-professional processes	Identifying the unethical, aethical and nursing professionals iatrogenic issues through qualitative analysis the ethical-professional processes open next to COREN-SP on January 1, 2001 period to December 31, 2004.
Ethical occurrences with nursing professionals: a quantitative study. ⁷	190 occurrences with ethical nursing professionals of a health facility of the city of São Paulo.	Identifying some characteristics of ethical occurrences related to damage caused to the clientele, the institution and the professionals involved and the guidelines made by the immediate supervisors and nursing Ethics Committee (EEC) professionals involved, as well as the sectors of the occurrences and the amount of people involved in them, in a private hospital in the city of São Paulo, in the period from 1995 to 2004.
Construction and validation of an instrument for measurement of ethical problem in the basic attention. ¹⁹	21 professionals working in health services practice in the basic attention, reorganized by the family health strategy, which were enrolled in the course of specialization in public health with a focus on the family health program.	Formulating an instrument for identifying and measuring the occurrence of ethical problems in the basic attention, reorganized by strategy (PSF). Validate instrument for identifying and measuring the occurrence of ethical problems in the basic attention, reorganized the PSF strategy.
Development process and initial validation of the Ethical Conflict in Nursing Questionnaire-Critical Care Version. ²⁰	205 nursing professionals of intensive care units at two hospitals in Barcelona (Spain)	Describing the development and validation of an instrument designed to measure ethical conflicts among nursing professionals in the intensive care unit (ICU).
Everyday Ethics: Ethical Issues and Stress in Nursing Practice. ²¹	1000 nurses in four States of the United States of America	Describing the type, frequency and stress level of ethical issues encountered by nurses in their daily practice.

Figure 2. Distribution of selected studies (n = 7), according to job title, the studied population and goal, Campo Grande, 2014.

It is observed that the studies, mostly, bring considerable samples, with more than 100 (one hundred) nursing professionals, and there are still those who pored over their own

infractions or ethical occurrences, regardless of how many involved in each one of them, probably made in large institutions. It should

be noted that kept the originality of the objective of the studies.

and results, Figure 1 suggests such information.

Regarding the type of occurrence and/or ethical infraction, methodological description

Type of Occurrence and/or ethics violation	Methodological Description	Level of evidence ¹⁶	Main Results
Negligence in the preparation and/or administration of medications; Lack of communication between the nursing professionals and the client/family and professionals of other areas. ⁴	Descriptive, exploratory study, retrospective and quantitative approach	VI	Most ethical occurrences were communicated by the nurses. The main professionals involved in occurrences were nursing assistants.
Recklessness, ineptitude and negligence. Iatrogenic drug. Illegal exercise of the profession: medicine and nursing. Interbranch relations (bullying; limits and confrontation of powers, abuse of power, verbal aggression, physical assault, insubordination, abuse); Responsibility of nurses; Verbal assault and ill-treatment to patients; Diversion of psychotropic substances; Medical fraud; Trafficking in babies; Abortion; Plagiarism; Sexual harassment to the patient; Sexual harassment the escort; Professional and financial policy. ¹⁷	Quantitative study of exploratory-descriptive and documentary drawing. Quantitative study of exploratory-descriptive and documentary drawing.	VI	The main complainants are nurses and CEEs. The nurse is the professional that receives the highest number of complaints. Most of the lawsuits were filed, including cases in which application of penalties, the verbal warning excels.
Iatrogenic; Misrepresentation; Moral harassment; Abuse of power; Theft; Dereliction of duty; Physical aggression; Sexual abuse; Verbal aggression. ¹⁸	Exploratory and qualitative research cutting documentary.	VI	The main complainants are the CEEs and patients. The nursing assistants were more professionals reported. Being that the article more infringed the CEPE was article 16, followed by article 21 and 22.
Negligence. ⁷	Descriptive study, retrospective, exploratory and quantitative approach.	VI	The highest incidence of ethical incidents happened with the involvement of a nursing professional, without specific category. Being that of 190 occurrences in 99 there was no indication of any kind of damage to the patient.
Occurrence of ethical issues among professionals, users and their families; occurrences of ethical problems between the teams; occurrence of ethical problems in relations with the health system. Does not point occurrences ethics, because it comes to construction and validation of an instrument. ¹⁹	Methodological research of descriptive.	VI	Was built an instrument divided into three questionnaires. Was reviewed by 21 judges. The instrument is designed for application to active health teams in the basic attention.
Does not point which ethical conflicts, since it comes to preparation and validation of an instrument. Proposes an index of exposure to ethical conflict, within the area of nursing. ²⁰	Methodological research of descriptive	VI	It was built a 19-based instrument care scenarios with the potential to produce an ethical conflict in nurses who work in intensive care units. The instrument was reviewed by two committees of experts.
We used a scale adapted: "Ethical Issues", developed by the American society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH) to measure the frequency of direct involvement of respondents with ethical issues in their health practices. ²¹	Cross-sectional descriptive study	VI	The nurses have cited that the most common ethical issues are associated with the protection of patient's rights, autonomy and informed consent, interpersonal skills, prior planning and decision-making.

Figure 3. Distribution of selected studies (n = 7), according to type of occurrence and/or ethical violations, intervention and main results, Campo Grande, 2014.

The results show how some situations that cause harm to the patient are present in both occurrence and ethical infractions. Only two studies, discussed ethical infractions committed by nursing professionals and cleared by COREN from jurisdiction. All of the studies analyzed showed evidence level IV.

DISCUSSION

In the analysis of the results now described, it was found that despite the growing spread in the media, both written and televised on occurrences and/or ethical violations involving nursing professionals, are still rare disclosures of studies on the subject and the subject little discussed in national and international literature.^{13,21} Data published in 2011 by COFEN point out that in Brazil the number of nursing professionals is about professional 1,535,568, that amount to alert the need for more information concerning the professional exercise, both for career guidance policies concerning the qualification of professionals.²²

Scientific production pointed out that in addition to technical skills, it is essential that nursing professionals hold knowledge to exercise regulatory standards, human rights and professional obligations, and which recognize the importance of knowledge of legislation involves the careful technician employed in daily activities, since ignorance of the law of the exercise of nursing can culminate in occurrences or ethical violations.⁷

More than that, the nursing professionals must exercise the profession with ethical attitude, in addition to scientific knowledge and technical skill, being this performance marked by ethical standards established by CEPE, referring to professional organization the establishment of disclosure policies and strengthening the professional need to become aware of their ethical obligation to observing so many ethical principles as standards of their professional category²².

This perspective emphasizes the importance of analyzing the studies dealing with directly of the occurrences and ethical violations in which nursing professionals are involved. This decision may also encourage greater dissemination of procedures for determination of complaints and ethical occurrences.

In this sense, the increasing publication of studies in the last five years and the interest of the scientific community by theme may be related to publication of the new CEPE, approved and revised in May 12nd, 2007, by

resolution 311/2007, the spread of new media complaints, added to increased oversight on the part of the governing class.² Due to difficulty of studying occurrences and/or ethical violations as soon as they happen, most studies rely on descriptive and exploratory research of documents stored by the EEC in the case of occurrences, or to ethical-professional processes stored in COREN, in the case of ethical violations.

The studies reviewed indicate that researchers have worked primarily ethical occurrences, namely those that were subject to the EEC, being resolved in this same instance.³⁻⁷ The CEEs are defined as "representative bodies Regional Councils along the healthcare facilities, educational, advisory functions and the supervisory professional and ethical exercise of nursing professionals".^{23:1}

Occurrences more incidents in studies related to iatrogenic neglect-related, which inserts the nursing procedures, with emphasis on medicinal therapies.^{4,7} The iatrogenic are understood as an undesirable change, harmful in nature or harmful to the patient and can be triggered by omission or inadvertent action or failure, voluntary or involuntary practiced by who watches the patient, in this case the nursing professional.²⁴

The studies also point occurrences related to deficiency in communication, both among nursing professionals as among the other health care professionals and between the client/family, ineffective communication can also lead to the medicinal iatrogenic.²⁵ It should be noted that light technologies like the dialogue, the respect and the otherness, practiced among health professionals and customers, encourages harmony and corroborates in safe and qualified assistance.

The data call attention to ethical infractions committed by nursing professionals; two studies conducted by the regional councils of nursing of two Brazilian States, point out that the scenario does not differ from the ethical incidents registered in other studies, because two key points were also present in ethical infractions, being the iatrogenic negligence recklessness and malpractice-related and interpersonal relationships in the workplace.^{17,18}

In iatrogenic negligence deserves attention-related errors in the administration of medicines, such as exchange of medication and wrong dosage, route of administration, administration of medications not prescribed by a doctor, just like other errors associated with the lack of attention and knowledge of nursing professionals regarding the basics of

pharmacokinetics and pharmacodynamics.^{17,18} Data warn of the emphasis on vocational training, which should ensure the depth in teaching disciplines and techniques related to medications.

The results revealed the major occurrences and ethical infractions committed by nursing professionals in the performance of its functions, however it is essential to the understanding of the causes that triggered such iatrogenic, in an attempt to remedy them or prevent them. These findings demonstrate the lack of knowledge of nursing professionals about the therapeutic treatments, more specifically the medicated. The administration of medicine requires in addition to technical skills, scientific knowledge and action planning. This denotes a constant need for personal improvement is through continuing education and/or provided by the institution of permanent activities and even, by the governing class.

Interpersonal conflicts are also present in the occurrences and ethical violations, thus it is necessary a closer look by the training schools and the Board of class, because this question must be treated in a more emphatic and clear, since in addition to scientific knowledge and technical skills is essential to a harmonious performance by the nursing staff for that assistance be provided effectively. In this context, the interpersonal conflicts are unfavorable directly affecting the dynamism and the relationship of professionals. It is of the utmost importance that there should be the development of a harmonious work and synchronized, impairing the team spirit, where the professionals seek one end in common, safe care.

With regard to the involvement of nursing professionals, the data showed that often professionals involved, in both instances as in the ethical infractions, are nursing auxiliaries, in these studies 02 are professionals more reported, but the nurses received more complaints regarding your professional exercise.^{4,17,18} These data can be justified by the high contingent of nursing assistants (about 508,182 registered by the COFEN), or the shared responsibility of the professional nurse for its competence as measured in the law of the professional practice of nursing (LEPE).^{1,22}

As the complainant observed that the majority of complaints are made by EEC, demonstrating the active supervision of the professional performance by the EEC, some studies show that, with the performance of the EEC the inquiries on professional issues are better addressed and evaluated,

subsidizing both conditions analysis of the quality of nursing care provided, when the working conditions offered.^{23,26} Some complaints have also been made by nurses, being these professionals responsible for guidance and supervision of the nursing team¹, few complaints were made by patients and/or their companions.

The penalties applied in cases of ethical violations are: verbal warning, fine, censure, suspension and forfeiture of professional practice. In the studies analyzed it was found that the most common penalty was the verbal warning, being that this is the "admonition to the offender, so reserved, which is logged in the same chart, in the presence of two witnesses."^{2:11}

One of the studies still pointed articles 16, 21 and 22 of the CEPE as the main articles infringed, all these articles are included in the Group of duties regarding relations with the person, family and collective.^{2:18} This data indicates the need for changes in the formation and improvement of nursing professionals, signaling the lack of articulation between knowledge, skills and values. Generating interference on capacity of these professionals in solving the ethical problems arising during the professional practice.^{18,27}

Other relevant data refers to studies within the framework of the basic attention, little has studied on the subject and found only one study aimed to develop work.¹⁹ And validate a tool to identifying and measuring the occurrence of ethical problems in teams of the family health strategy (FHS). The construction process of the instrument for identifying and measuring the occurrence of ethical problems in the basic attention began in 2004, being this first version based on ethical issues singled out by nurses and doctors of the FHS. The authors mention that the instrument was ready to be submitted to a test pilot and still indicated that the purpose of validation of the instrument has not been achieved.

The construction and validation of instrument is also performed in another study, however in this, the scope of the instrument was the ICU and sought to describe the development and validation of an instrument designed to measure ethical conflicts among nursing professionals.²⁰ The instrument was developed in Spanish and initially comprised of 19 care scenarios, which had the potential to produce an ethical conflict in nurses who work in intensive care units. In order to test the validity of content of initial version of the instrument, each of its elements has been evaluated by two committees of experts.

The ethical conflict is considered in the study, such as the relationship between the four variables: the frequency of occurrence of situations involving an ethical conflict, the level of conflict produced, the exposure of the individual to an ethical conflict and the kind ethical conflict lived.²⁰ The study in question is the first to consider the type of experienced conflict and propose an index of exposure to ethical conflict within the area of nursing.

Due to the complexity of the intensive care unit, this presents a large number of iatrogenic events, associated with rapid interventions, which mostly are made without the detailed analysis of medical records and the application of the nursing process. Accordingly, the elaboration of an instrument to identify and evaluate the index of exposure to ethical conflicts is crucial to meet the reality of ethical conflicts present in this hospital unit, corroborating with the targeting of specific actions aimed at "prioritize permanent education, upgrading and training, in order to minimizing ethical occurrences".^{8:6}

Professional health nursing has received focus in the present day, some researchers have discussed the quality of life and the level of stress encountered by these professionals in their respective workplaces.²⁸ On this one of studies in addition to identifying the most common ethical issues among nurses, also sought to describe the type, frequency and stress level of the ethical questions encountered.²⁰ The ethical problems of higher level of stress, cited by the nurses were associated with the protection of patient's rights, autonomy and informed consent, interpersonal skills, prior planning and decision-making.

It is observed that the issues listed in this study are inherent in the exercise of professional nursing, reinforcing the need for greater emphasis on these issues not only in professional training, but also in the fields of expertise. This study demonstrated that ethical issues in everyday practice are increasingly problematic, not only nationally, but also internationally and that nurses feel uncomfortable to address the ethical issues they face on a daily basis, during the patient's assistance²¹. A Brazilian study signals that the form of organization of work of the institutions of health generates workload nursing professionals, and that this factor may be contributing to that there are no reflections and discussions between nursing professionals about the ethical problems experienced in their daily lives.²⁷

Finally, it is important to report occurrences and ethical violations for not bringing the customer, brings the effect of malfeasance. Beaucham and Childress²⁹ in his work *Principles of Biomedical Ethics*, defending four fundamental principles of bioethics: non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy and justice. Thus with the occurrence of iatrogenic, two of these principles are violated, the non-maleficence and beneficence. The principle of non-maleficence refers to the obligation not to inflict harm or intentional damage to each other. While the benefit can be understood as the obligation to prevent damage, acting for the benefit of another or even act ethically, focusing on what's best for the patient, since the minimization of risks to the maximization of the benefits.²⁹

In this sense it is recommended that nursing take ownership of this theoretical framework to the development of some actions, such as, analyze their daily practices, in its dimension bioethics, renew their actions and create spaces for discussions. In this way, these actions need to be done not only by the regulatory agencies of exercise professionals, but also by training schools, formulating joint interventions aimed at beyond prevention of occurrences of rehabilitation professional ethics violators. It is essential the development of support measures and follow-up nursing professional emotional engages in iatrogenic, for which the same feel bolstered by both the institution and the class Council.³⁰

The research pointed out the dearth of studies on the subject that reflect strong evidence showing a gap in knowledge, it was found that most of the studies found were classified as descriptive level of evidence VI¹⁶, considered weak.

Before this, although they have not been found in the literature data on the frequency of violations and/or ethical incidents among nursing professionals, one can note that some authors are expanding the horizons for this issue, some studies already point the professional profile of offenders, major infractions, whistleblowers, outcome of the process, key articles of the CEPE which were infringed and the construction and validation of tools to measure the ethical problems/ethical occurrences. The literature pointed out that there is an urgent need for national and international strategies for dealing with such situations, thus the healthcare institutions should consider all the problems, conflicts, incidents and ethical infractions that nursing professionals are

subject and how this affects their professional development and their own well-being.

CONCLUSION

The limitations of the study are in sources surveyed, where it decided to perform search in the sources mentioned in the description of the method, and motivation to other studies the expansion of databases. Nevertheless, the low number of publications identified can be seen as an alert to the need to produce research that bring results and reflections on the importance of the subject for the Academy itself.

The studies showed that the major occurrences and ethical infractions committed by nursing professionals refer to iatrogenic related to neglect, clumsiness and recklessness, especially medicinal and conflicting interpersonal relationships. For being daily subject to infractions or ethical nursing professionals occurrences need to have full knowledge of the bioethical, legal and ethical precepts present in general legislation and specific legislations of nursing, that guide the practice of care.

Although the dissemination by the media of increasing demand ethics involving nursing professionals showed the lack of national and international scientific production. Thereby it is recommended the production of studies involving the ethical and legal aspects which are submitted the nursing professionals, which constitute the largest healthcare professional contingent, contributing with the teaching and practice of nursing, based on secure actions.

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