

The Relationships among Moral Distress, Self-Transcendence and Professional Autonomy in Nurses Who Provided Care for Elderly Patients with Cognitive Impairment in Acute Care Hospitals

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among moral distress, self-transcendence and professional autonomy in nurses who provided care for elderly patients with cognitive impairment in acute care hospitals based on the self-transcendence theory.

Methodology

The research design was descriptive correlational study. **The subjects** were convenience sample of 188 nurses who had two or more years of clinical experience of caring for elderly patients with cognitive impairment in acute care hospitals. **The instruments** were Japanese Moral Distress Scale-Revised in Cognitive Impaired Elderly Patients' Care (13 items composed of three factors, Cronbach's $\alpha = .90$), Japanese Self-Transcendence Scale (17 items composed of one factor, Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$) and The Scale for Professional Autonomy in Nursing for Cognitive Impaired Elderly Patients (34 items composed of four factors, Cronbach's $\alpha = .96$). **Pearson's and Spearman's correlational analyses** were used. This study obtained approval from the ethical review committee for research of Japanese Red Cross College of Nursing.

Results

The subjects were 176 women (93.6%) and the mean age was 31.3 (SD = 6.81) years. The average years of clinical experience was 8.4 (SD = 6.19) and 62.8% of them were university graduates. According to the

Table1. Characteristics of the Subjects (N=188)

		Frequency (%)
Age	mean (SD) year	31.3(6.81)
Gender	Female	176 (93.6)
	Male	12 (6.4)
Educational Degree	Diploma	54 (28.7)
	Associate's	16 (8.5)
	Bachelor's	118 (62.8)
Clinical Experience	mean (SD) year	8.4 (6.19)
Type of Unit	Surgical	45 (23.9)
	Medical	38 (20.2)
	Medical/Surgical	94 (50.0)
	Other	11 (5.8)

result, the correlation between moral distress and self-transcendence was statistically significant ($p = .17, p < .05$). It was indicated that the level of moral distress had a small positive relationship with self-transcendence. Self-transcendence had significant positive relationship with professional autonomy ($\gamma = .26, p < .001$), although moral distress were not related to professional autonomy.

Table 2. Correlations among Study Variables (N=188)

	1	2
1. JMDS-R 13 items	1.00	
2. JSTS 17 items	$\rho = 0.17^*$	1.00
3. SPAN 34 items	$\rho = 0.11$	$r = 0.26^{**}$

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level.

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level.

Discussion

These findings suggest that nurses with stronger moral distress have a higher level of self-transcendence and nurses with higher level of self-transcendence have a stronger sense of professional autonomy in providing care to elderly patients with cognitive impairment.