Purpose: With increasing numbers of nurses leaving the profession, it is vital nurse educators prepare nursing students for real world practice with the inclusion of moral dilemmas in their curricula. Nursing students who have experiential learning in healthcare environments are at risk of experiencing moral dilemmas that result in moral distress and ultimately interrupt the learning process. This study investigated the relationships among moral distress, moral courage, and moral resilience in undergraduate nursing students. The research question for this study asked if nursing students with greater moral resilience and moral courage report less moral distress.

Methods: This study used a descriptive correlational design to examine moral distress, moral courage, and moral resilience among undergraduate nursing students in addition to investigating their interrelationships. A convenience sample of nursing students distributed among three sites were surveyed using three tools: the Moral Distress Thermometer (MDT), the Connor-Davidson Moral Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), and the Moral Courage Scale for Physicians (MSCP). Secondary research questions asked if students with higher moral resilience have less moral distress, or if students with higher moral courage have less moral distress, and does moral courage predict moral distress more than moral resiliency.

Results: Forty-five senior nursing students reported mild levels of moral distress ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 1.9$). Moral resilience was significantly correlated with moral courage, age, and students having a previous degree. Moral questions added to the CD-RISC had significant relationships that contributes to the paucity of measuring moral resilience.

Conclusion: The findings from this research study contribute to the gap in literature regarding the concepts of moral distress, moral courage, and moral resilience in nursing students. This study expands the literature in providing a baseline assessment of moral resilience in nursing students. Interventions to cultivate moral resilience in nursing curricula is necessary. Valid instruments to measure moral resilience and moral distress in nursing students should also be investigated further.
moral resilience scales, and interventions to enhance moral courage and moral resilience are warranted.

References:

First Primary Presenting Author
Primary Presenting Author
Erin Gibson, PhD, RN, CCRN-K
Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center School of Nursing
Traditional Undergraduate Program
Assistant Professor
Lubbock TX
USA

Author Summary: Erin Gibson has been a nurse since 2006, with experience in critical care, leadership and management, and academia. In 2014 Erin became an instructor in a BSN program teaching students primarily at the entry level. Erin facilitates and leads Core Concepts with coordination among three different campus sites with a synchronized classroom. She recently completed her PhD in nursing at the University of Texas at Tyler with research in nursing ethics.