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Methodology

A sequential mixed method research design was employed. The study consists of three phases. The first phase of this study explored the nursing practices of the Indian nurses by conducting focus groups. The data that emerged from the first phase revealed that a concern related to quality care was the contradiction between the rights and responsibilities of nurses as employees. To explore this dichotomy, in-depth individual interviews were conducted with experts in the field of medical law and ethics.

Conclusions

There is a constant conflict between the rights and responsibilities of a patient and a nurse.

Rights and responsibilities have an effect on both the dignity of the patient and of the nurse.

The drive to consider patients’ rights and their experiences has escalated in the recent year due to measurement of patient experience, funder agreements and survey results. The patient-centric culture being promoted in healthcare is skewed toward the patient and may neglect aspects of the nurses’ rights in some instances.

This is exacerbated by the current employment legislation in South Africa, which is there to promote the rights of the employee in the workplace. However, the interpretation of this legislation is not always accurate.

Healthcare workers are in service of their patients/clients and in most instances, under normal circumstances their rights should become secondary to those of their patients. In reality this is not so, as identified in this research where nurses were likely prioritise their own rights over patient rights.

Poster presenters: Sharon Vasanthevan, Izelle Loots & Prof Gisela van Rensburg

Recommendations

- Promote the awareness of professional conduct and ethical guidelines
- Identify and develop care champions in nursing units
- Create awareness of the professional dignity of nurses
- Promote rights of patients in all health institutions

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