

Ethics, a humanitarian act in Nursing and Gerontological research

La ética, un acto humano en el desarrollo de la investigación en Enfermería y Gerontología

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Speaking of ethics in the field of nursing research entails the guided search for solutions to problems which are susceptible to intervention from human health sciences. In the disciplines of nursing and obstetrics, there is direct interaction between the professional and the patient at different stages of the process. There are numerous rules and criteria that every professional must learn and put into practice. A model of beliefs, personal family values, and the new normal are reflected in the professional performance of each individual.

The way in which these professionals work is based on coherently-defined social values and needs, such as academic training; the purpose of which is to ensure the fulfillment of legal and ethical rules, based on respect, justice, and equality. The responsibility that each professional accepts is based on the ethical code, which explains the purposes, values, and obligations of the profession. This code serves to enhance development in terms of professional practice, based on standards of quality and for the good of society¹.

Applying a code of ethics in the field of nursing and gerontology is not easy. One must highlight the values found in the humanities: respect for life, death, as well as the values and beliefs of others. Cultural diversity calls for guidance and strengthening of ethical responsibility in every profession. By identifying moral duties when these are not fulfilled, one can reflect on one's own performance. Professionals are free to make decisions to fulfill the goals of one's discipline. Free will should be exercised based on reason and volition; it should be based on universal principles of morality and responsibility for one's own actions.

A professional may be guided by personal interests or by daily activities; however, a professional's moral and professional ethics strengthen the value of the person as a unique, rational, perfectible, and autonomous being. Appealing to one's personal conviction paves the way towards a common good based on respect and human dignity. One must recognize value in every individual, reflect on the meaning of one's interests, one's problems, and one's position in life. Furthermore, one must assess one's willingness to interact with and help others in all stages of life. One may aid another biologically, psychologically, socially, culturally, and spiritually. That is to say, behaving ethically implies understanding life and others, contributing to self, family, and community care. This care is based on scientific principles, technical backing, and humanistic guidance. These guide behavior within the framework of a code of ethics that represents the best possible professional practice².

A code of ethics serves as a guide for establishing responsibilities, promoting ethical conduct in terms of knowledge, dignity, respect for oneself, and society. That is to say, behaving ethically brings together metaparadigms of a discipline whose central focus is the individual. In this context, the individual interacts to face the health-illness process as well as aging.

Ethics demands that professionals provide a unanimous testimony of their actions, that professionals' love life, and that professionals live by their values. They must be capable of observing and identifying human needs. They must reflect optimistically and in a self-fulfilling manner on their professional practice in providing high-quality holistic care. Likewise, it is necessary to recognize their potential and opportunities for improvement in terms of incorporating and confronting their own values in situations of adversity. Their professional practice must consist of ethical actions at all times.

For research in nursing and gerontology, interaction with humans is inevitable. This interaction may be in the form of an individual, a family, or a community. The objective of nursing and gerontology research is to study care and the aging process respectively. There are ethical dilemmas, which need to be faced in professional practice.

The first of these ethical principles to consider for research purposes is respect for human rights, values, customs and beliefs at the level of the individual, family, and community. Other obligatory considerations include age, race, culture, disability, illness, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, political opinions, ethnicity, social position, and the protection of vulnerable groups. Therefore, participants in the study must receive sufficient information regarding their participation. Participants gave their informed consent for their information to be studied and analyzed in order to help solve the problems associated with research in this profession².

Over time, ethical principles for research have become increasingly relevant. This is particularly true for the search for wellbeing in individuals and groups. Respect, protection, benefit, and justice are some principles that the researcher must consider in order to avoid causing injury, disability, or even death to the research participant.

Therefore, the knowledge generation in which the research participants live requires informed voluntary consent for participation in the process. Describing and explaining the objective, the method, the duration, the procedure and the inherent risks and benefits of this research in detail is crucial. Participants were free to leave the experiment at any moment. Doing so would not lead to any sanction or failure to receive a reward. These are fundamental aspects that must be considered before starting the research.

This research was conducted in the following profession: nursing and gerontology. This research paid great attention to the ethical principles of a human act of caring for life. Creating knowledge for professional practice requires the adoption of a code of ethics as well as the conviction to behave honestly and loyally while caring for others.

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