

Can Health and Nursing Assistance Practice be Improved through Ethical Reflection?

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When considering the health and nursing assistance scenarios we can often identify facts and elements that indicates that only the application of policies and guidelines is not enough to promote the quality of assistance. In the face of conflicts and dilemmas, so present in these places, it becomes necessary the development of moral sensibility, allowing the professional an ethical reflection on the occurrences. Institutional norms and professional codes must interact with the assistance practice, since the problems present in the practice are not always adequately contemplated in these and so little discussed in the team [1].

In the assistance practice the professionals experience daily situations of moral problems and ethical conflicts. The moral problems occurs when there are different perceptions about the same situation, not being adequately solved. Ethical conflicts emerge when something disturbs the conscience of one or both parts involved due to the different moral and personal values, which influence in the way of interpreting daily professional [2] situations. Problems and conflicts can lead to the incident of dilemmas and moral suffering.

Among the conflicting and dilemmatic situations experienced in the health practice, one can list those resulting from (de)organization of work, such as the lack of human and material resources as well as those resulting from institutional embarrassment, such as the lack of autonomy and support, inability to exercise the patient's advocacy and disrespect to his rights, therapeutic obstinacy, among others [3].

All these situations are quite often not even recognized by workers which assume a normal character, since they are common in the practice environments. Consequently, many workers start to manifest a sense of affliction and develop a moral sensibility which can be understood as a process that build the ethical experience of the individual and results from stagnation in front of a problem, in which they are unable to implement an action considered correct, having an obstruction in the process of moral deliberation [3].

Therefore, considering the preoccupation to provide a quality and safe care to the patient, it is essential that assistance be based on ethical practice with empowerment of all those involved in clinical situations. It's necessary that each one can discuss and solve, in a shared manner, situations of conflict and adverse to work [4,5], which sets a positive ethical mood in this context. The ethical mood can be defined as the perceptibility of health professionals regarding to the ethical treatment of assistance issues and relationship in their work environment, being influenced by the organizations behavior [6].

In view of this, literature points out that for improvements in the insertion of ethics in the routine of health services [2] it is necessary to improve the ethical mood. Thus, it is necessary that management and ethical consultants who help professionals deal with difficult situations and deliberate on them, engage in units' routine by following up cases and investing in periodic reunions to listen and understand their collaborators and the real situation experienced in their sectors [4].

It is important to emphasize that discussions on ethical issues in assistance must be based on the relationship webs supported by communication between multi-professional team, patients, companions and family members [1,2]. This practice can help managers to realize the problems experienced by professionals in their daily lives and act to implement strategies and routines that will contribute to a professional exercise of moral and ethical integrity. Furthermore, use strategies that reduce suffering and intention to abandon work or profession, specially Nursing which, when compared to other health categories is one of most affected by emotional exhaustion for keeping constantly at the front line of care [7].

The management and ethics committees of institutions can create, among the possible strategies, capabilities on educational issues, moral deliberation and others ethical abilities as support in health assistance, promoting conferences and seminars about the subject [4]. These discussions may collaborate to promote a moral sensitivity [5], holistic understanding of clinical practice and the realization of a more positive ethical mood [2,4].

From this reflection we can understand that ethical support is an important ally to a quality assistance, through good practice and a good interpersonal relationship contributing to the constitution of ethical individuals with a major consciousness about their actions.

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