

Z-Chap 19 Online Assignment
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There are many ethical issues that currently effect the nursing profession. Some examples of ethical matters that are prominent in the nursing profession are abortion, euthanasia, medical futility, transplantation, in vitro fertilization, distribution of scarce resources, involuntary commitment, vaccinations, and so many more.

Abortion has been an ethical dilemma for a long time in the United States. There are two sides to this issue that many are aware of today being pro-choice and pro-life. This affects nurses in multiple clinical settings and debates the reproductive rights of woman in the United States. The views that drive opinions on abortion derive from religious texts and beliefs. The main questions that are asked by those deciphering this dilemma is when does life begin and does a fetus have rights and if so, does the fetuses rights overpower the woman's right of autonomy. So, you may ask how are nurses affected by this? Nurses are affected both personally and in their careers. As a nurse you must look inward and assess your own beliefs and values to ensure you do not exhibit bias in situations or mistreat patients for having differing views than you. This is especially important if you decide to work in an environment abortions are being conducted at. As the nurse the patient is your main priority and despite your personal beliefs you have to care for that patient as you would any other. You are there to be of service and your job is to help people not discriminate based off disagreements. This is not implying you as an individual must give up your own opinion but as a nurse you do not share this opinion or force your beliefs onto your patient. The ANA code of ethics states that "The nurse's primary commitment is to the patient, whether an individual, family, group, community, or population" (ANA, 2017). This means that when you are in the role of a nurse your priority should not be your personal wants or beliefs but instead your patients. The ANA code of ethics also states that "The nurse practices with compassion and respect for the inherent dignity, worth, and unique attributes of each person" (ANA, 2017). This aligns with the fact that as a nurse you have a responsibility to care for all patients regardless of their unique opinions and differing views. That patient needs your care regardless. The code of ethics promotes the idea that nurses must not abandon their patients and nurses can be held accountable by legal standards on this statement.

Euthanasia is another huge topic that involves ethics and healthcare. Euthanasia is the idea of allowing an individual suffering to be killed via painless measures. Euthanasia can be active meaning the patient receives a lethal drug or other effort to end life which is illegal in the United States, passive meaning the patient is taken off of life saving measures such as ventilation and is a common occurrence in the clinical setting, and lastly voluntary euthanasia which is also known as physician assisted suicide where a patient presents their desires of when they would want to pass and the physician then gives the materials needed such as a lethal drug to allow this. This affects nurses because nurses are a part of the healthcare team and have their own opinions on what they feel is right for individual patient situations.

There is also discussion and debates over medical futility and whether interventions beyond comfort measures to a patient who is not going to improve from it is right or wrong.

There's also feuds over transplantations and who should receive organs based off what criteria. IVF is a topic that is discussed based on ethics due to it being "unnatural" and possibly promoting "designer babies". If there's scarce resources should a person with health insurance willing to pay get the resources first or should it be equal? If a patient is at risk of harm to themselves or others, is it wrong to involuntarily admit them to a psychiatric unit? What if a mother refuses to vaccinate their child but you as the nurse knows the major risks of not receiving childhood vaccines? There are so many ethical topics in the health care setting that affect and will continue to affect my career as a nurse. Overall, in my career it is important to understand my role as a nurse separate from my personal views. Every patient has rights including that they can make their own choices based on their own beliefs and views just like every other individual could do the same and my job is to advocate for them and their wishes (National Library of Medicine, 2022). Finding a balance and understanding your duties and responsibilities as a registered nurse, especially in ethically questionable situations is extremely important.

Resources

Code of ethics for Nurses. ANA. (2017, October 26). Retrieved February 28, 2023, from <https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/nursing-excellence/ethics/code-of-ethics-for-nurses/>

National Library of Medicine. (2022, August). *Nursing ethical considerations - statpearls - NCBI bookshelf*. Retrieved February 28, 2023, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK526054/>