

Moral Empowerment as an Intervention to Reduce Moral Distress: A Pre-Experimental Study Among Nursing Staff in Kolkata Hospitals

Rimi Chakraborty

Mansarovar Global University, Sehore, Madhya Pradesh, India

Dr. Asha Sreenivasan

Mansarovar Global University, Sehore, Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

Moral distress is a major psychological problem that nurses face, especially in high-stress clinical settings, but it is often ignored. It arises when nurses acknowledge the ethical correct course of action but are institutionally impeded from executing it, resulting in emotional fatigue, compromised professional integrity, and eventual withdrawal from ethical patient care.

As the systemic origins of this phenomenon become more widely understood, empowerment-based interventions have garnered academic and practical interest globally. This study examines the efficacy of a structured Moral Empowerment Programme (MEP) in alleviating moral distress among registered nursing personnel in designated hospitals in Kolkata, India. The researchers employed a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design for the study. They chose a purposive sample of 50 registered nurses from Multi-speciality Hospital, Kolkata. A validated instrument, exhibiting substantial reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.942$), was employed to assess moral distress before and following the intervention. The MEP, which took place over three weeks, included lessons on ethics, reflective practice, role-playing ethical dilemmas, and mentoring from more experienced professionals.

The results showed that the intervention led to a statistically significant decrease in moral distress. Comparisons of pre-test and post-test results showed a substantial drop in both the frequency ($t = 5.181, p < 0.01$) and the distribution ($t = 16.4, p < 0.01$) of moral distress scores. Nurses employed in critical care units exhibited elevated levels of distress, underscoring the necessity for specialised ethical support in intensive environments.

The outcomes confirm that interventions centred on empowerment can considerably alleviate moral distress and improve ethical resilience among nursing personnel. This study recommends the incorporation of such training modules into standard professional development and institutional policy to promote ethical nursing practice and enhance organizational commitment.

Keywords

Moral distress, nursing ethics, empowerment program, critical care nursing, ethical decision-making, professional resilience, pre-experimental study.