Navigating Ethical Dilemmas in Nursing Practice: A Review of Literature

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Abstract—Challenging situations with significant consequences in humanitarian concepts of care often result in ethical dilemmas, as healthcare professionals must weigh both desirable and undesirable effects. Changing nursing trends and the expanding scope of practice highlight the need for frameworks to manage these dilemmas effectively. This review aims to explore the ethical dilemmas encountered by nurses, examine ethical decision-making models, and analyze how these models are applied to resolve common ethical issues in nursing practice. A literature review was conducted in Google Scholar, PubMed, and Science Direct. Inclusion criteria were peer-reviewed articles published between the years 2000 and 2023, focusing on nursing ethics, available in full text in English. Exclusion criteria were non-peer-reviewed sources and studies not related to nursing practice. From 3704 articles, 32 were selected. A rapid review was performed to identify key ethical decision-making models. The findings suggest that moral distress due to inadequate staffing and workload is a common cause of ethical dilemmas. A conceptual framework was developed, categorizing ethical dilemmas based on moral reasoning, decision-making, and action. Policy changes, education, and management adjustments are needed to improve nurses' confidence and Ethical Decision-Making Skills.

Keywords—Decision-Making, Dilemma, Ethics, Models, Nursing