

**Evaluation of Nurses' Compliance with
Ethical and Legal Considerations in
Nursing Care of Neonates at
Neonatal Intensive Care Unit**

Thesis

*Submitted for Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement of Master Degree in
Pediatric Nursing*

By

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✍ Asmaa Adel Ali

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List of Abbreviations

<i>Abb.</i>	<i>Full Term</i>
AACN	American Association of Colleges of Nursing
ANA	American Nurses Association
ASFPA	American Society for Public Administration
CCA	Complete Correct Answer
CCNE	Commission Collegiate Nursing Education
CNA	Canadian Nurse Association
CNS	Clinical Nurse Specialist
CPAP	Continuous Positive Airway Pressure
DK	Don't Know
EDM	Ethical Decision- Making
EIS	Ethical Issue Scale
EOL	End of Life Care
HECs	Hospital Ethics Committees
HRI	Human Right Issue
IA	Incorrect Answer
ICA	Incomplete Correct Answer
ICN	International council of Nurses
ICRC	Infant Care Review Committee
IUGR	Intrauterine Growth Retardation
LBW	Low Birth Weight
NANN	National Association of Neonatal Nurses
NMC	Nursing Midwifery Council
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

<i>Abb.</i>	<i>Full Term</i>
NPA	Nurse Practice Act
PAEF	Public Administration Ethical Framework
PCI	Patient Care Issue
NNP	Neonatal Nurse Practitioners
QOL	Quality of Life
UAP	Unlicensed Assistive Person
WHO	World Health Organization

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Abstract

Introduction: Ethical and legal considerations are vital in areas dealing with neonates. Therefore, nurses are obligated to provide neonates with ethical and legal care to smooth the illness experience for neonates, families and staff.

Aim of the study: The study aimed to assess nurses' compliance with ethical and legal considerations in nursing care of neonates at NICU. **Research**

design: A descriptive design utilized to achieve the aim of this study. **Setting**

and sample size: The study was carried out in NICU at El Monira General Hospital and Children's Hospital, which affiliated to Ministry of Health /

Egypt and Ain Shams University Hospitals respectively. The sample size included all available nurses (50) who were working at the previously mentioned settings. **Tools:** Two tools were used to collect data. **Frist tool:**

Interviewing questionnaire sheet, which was consisted of two main parts to gather data in relation to nurses's characteristics data and their knowledge regarding ethical and legal considerations in nursing care of neonates at NICU. **Second tool:** Likert-type rating scale to assess nurses' compliance with ethical and legal considerations in nursing care of neonates at NICU. **Results:**

The study revealed that, nearly two-thirds (64%) of the studied nurses were complied with ethical and legal considerations in caring of neonates at NICU. There was a statistical significant difference between total knowledge and total compliance of the studied nurses and their characteristics. **Conclusion:**

Most of the studied nurses were complied with ethical and legal considerations in nursing care of neonates at NICU. **Recommendation:** The study recommended to study factors affecting nurses' compliance with ethical and legal considerations in caring of neonates at NICU.

Key words: Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Neonatal Nurses, Ethical Considerations, Legal Considerations, Compliance.

Introduction

The whole health system is faced with issues such as the rapid advancement of technology, economic changes, resource constraints, and problems in health care delivery. Neonatal units are always filled by moral conflicts constantly exposed to ethical issues and challenges such as abortion, end of life care, and medical errors. Amazing advances in the care of critically ill neonates have led to challenging established standards and clear procedures in neonatal care **(Kadivar et al., 2015)**.

Critically ill neonates is a highly demanding group of patients, often prematurely born, spending months in incubators surrounded by technical equipment, parents, and health professionals. Neonatal nurses report a great deal of ethical challenges in their everyday work **(Strandås and Fredriksen, 2015)**.

Nursing profession is guided by both ethics and legal principles as they are tools for response to one another. Ethics and the law are closely related in concepts, such as rights and justice, have both ethical and legal significance, they are both instruments of regulation and prescriptions on how people ought to act in response to one another. Nursing

ethics and law are necessary in nursing. This is because nursing is concerned with providing services that impact on human life and health and some of the situations the nurse encounters in practice pose dilemma that if not well handled, may impact negatively on the neonates at NICU and all who are concerned (**Aliyu et al., 2015**).

The ethical practices that govern neonatal nursing are fall into the following categories; non-maleficence, beneficence, respect and treat infants as they have a right to be treated and treat infant fairly (**Sundean and McGrath, 2013**). Therefore, ethical knowledge helps neonatal nurse to justify what is correct or not and appropriate professional practice to conduct. In addition, it promotes respect for and promotion of the principles of bioethics and the rights of health services users, which are crucial elements in humanized care (**Erickson and Payne, 2016**).

Ethical considerations are vital in any area dealing with human beings because they respect values, rights and relationships. Nurses are obligated to provide ethical and legal pediatric and neonatal care that demonstrates respect for others (**Hafez et al., 2016**).

Nurses' awareness of their values and the effect of these values on their behavior is a core part of humanistic nursing care. Nurses need to tailor their function to the values system and cultural beliefs of the service recipients. Values originate from cultural environment, social groups, religion, lived experiences and the past. Social, cultural, religious, political, and economic considerations influence the individuals and their value system, and ultimately, health, education, social strategies and patients' care (**Mohammadi et al., 2013**).

The **Nursing and Midwifery Council, (2014)** states that nurses must be able to recognize ethical challenges in their role and to practice in accordance with legal, professional and ethical frameworks to overcome these challenges. According to **Hagger et al., (2016)**, the nursing students gain experience of legal and ethical challenges during their education, and that undergraduate nursing courses incorporate content to encourage and support students to develop values that form the basis for professional attitudes and behaviors.



Significance of the study:

Historically, care providers have treated critically ill neonates first and reflected on the ethics of treatment later. Fortunately, ethical considerations of care are beginning to precede interventions even though no uniform approach to ethical decision-making (EDM) in the NICU exists (**Carter et al., 2011**). Sophisticated technological advances to treat the most critically ill neonates outpace clear ethical standards and approaches for NICU care. Therefore, it is important to carry out this study to shed light on the importance of complying of neonatal nurses with ethical and legal considerations in nursing care of neonates at NICU.