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Original Article

# Comparison of moral sensitivity among nursing student in Abadan University of Medical Sciences and Shushtar College

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## Abstract

### Introduction

One of the factors that can play a pivotal role in maintaining ethical values and preventing ethical distress in nurses is moral sensitivity. Therefore, this study was carried out with the aim. The comparison of moral sensitivity among nursing student in Abadan University of Medical Sciences And Shushtar College in 2018.

### Methods

The epidemiological descriptive-analytic study was conducted with a cross-sectional correlation method. The census sampling method was conducted on undergraduate nursing students in the third and fourth years in Abadan University of Medical Sciences and Shushtar College. For sampling this study, a questionnaire was used in two parts where the first part of that demographic and second part of the questionnaire was a moral sensitivity compiled by Kim Latzen. The questionnaire has 25 items and was analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent t-test, Chi-square, Pearson correlation coefficient, regression methods such as linear regression in SPSS v.21 and logistic regression were used to analyse the data.

### Results

In this study, the mean of moral sensitivity in all studied people was equal to 86.86. Also, the mean point of nursing students of Medical Sciences College of Shushtar was more than the students of Abadan University of Medical Sciences.

### Conclusion

It is suggested that in order to increase the moral sensitivity of nurses, they should be trained and evaluated from their first days of studying.

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## Introduction

Nowadays, providing wellness and health of people is the necessity of medical treatment and nursing care which is the goal of health and sanitary professions. Hence, these professions are expressed and described as ethical professions [1].

The nurse is also a member of the health team who should be aware of and sensitive to the ethical issues of his profession to respect his patient's rights and manage the influence of ethical issues in the clinical profession [2]. Being sensitive to



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ethical issues is one of the criteria for nurses, professional competence [3]. For this reason, nursing education organizations pay attention to this important goal in their learning planning [4]. One of the factors that can play a pivotal role in maintaining ethical values and preventing ethical distress in nurses is moral sensitivity [5]. As Noh et al. [6] expressed and introduced moral sensitivity as a decisive factor in the creation of moral distress, it is useful to have moral sensitivity to achieve the results of ethical performance. Moral sensitivity is one of the common ethical issues in the nursing profession which attracted the attention of researchers. Moral sensitivity is a feature that enables one to recognize ethical conflict and intellectual and emotional conception from susceptible situations and to be aware of the ethical outcomes in decision-making about others [7]. Moral sensitivity as the foundation and cornerstone of ethics in nursing provides a context for nurses to provide effective and ethical care to patients. The ethical sensitivity, while making sensitive the nurse in the face of ethical issues in its professional environment, authorizes him/her to make an ethical decision about patients [8]. a research was done by Karimi Naghandar et al [9], that was the moral sensitivity score of students. The findings also showed that there was no significant difference between people who passed ethical unit and people who did not. Also, according to Abbas Zadeh et al [10], the results of the mean of moral sensitivity of junior and senior students

showed that there was not a significant correlation between age, moral sensitivity and its components in the students. Yom et al. [5] While recognizing the high sensitivity of nursing students, state that due to the constant confrontation of nurses with ethical challenges, ethical education in this group is important to increase their moral sensitivity. The existence of moral sensitivity promotes the quality of care and develops nursing professional performance [11, 12]. Increasing the trust and satisfaction of patients about nursing activities and promoting the relationship between nurse and patient is other benefits [13].

Recent studies have been done more to assess the amount of moral sensitivity among nurses. The study was few among nursing trainees while this variable is experienced not only by nurses but it is also common among nursing students. Despite the fact that moral methods are an integral part of the academic education of nurses under training (trainees). Therefore, this study was carried out with the aim of The comparison of moral sensitivity among nursing student in Abadan University of Medical Sciences And Shushtar College in 2018.

## Methods

The epidemiological descriptive-analytic study was conducted with a cross-sectional correlation method on nursing students of Abadan University of Medical Sciences And Shushtar College in 2018. The census sampling method was conducted



on all undergraduate nursing students in the third and fourth years of Medical Sciences Colleges of Shushtar and University of Medical Sciences Abadan. The criteria for inclusion in the study included their academic year (third and fourth years) and passing a nursing ethics unit and an existing measure of people and non-passing nursing ethics unit. For sampling this study, a questionnaire was used in two parts where the first part of that demographic information questionnaire included questions such as age, gender, education term, work history along with education, and a nursing ethics unit passing. The second part of the questionnaire was a moral sensitivity compiled by Kim Latzen in the state of Sweden in 1994 [2] and then it was modified by Comrile. The questionnaire has 25 items that measure the ethical decision-making situation of nurses when offering clinical services and has six categories which contain the degree of respect for the help seekers' autonomy, the degree of awareness of how to communicate with the patient, the degree of professional knowledge, experience of problems and ethical conflicts, utilizing ethical concept in making ethical, honesty, and benevolence. The point of each question is calculated by the Likert method from totally disagree (zero points) to agree (four points). The highest and lowest points that a person can obtain from this questionnaire are 100 and zero, respectively. The validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by 97 % and its reliability was calculated a 0.81 according to

Cronbach's alpha coefficient [1]. In the study of Amiri et al. [14] the validity of the questionnaire was carried out with 83 % and Cronbach's alpha coefficient 70 %.

After explaining the researcher's questionnaire, the participants filled in the questionnaire in the presence of the researcher. The participants had the right to refuse to respond at any time. This study has been registered with the code IR.ABADANUMS.REC.1398.019 of ethics in Abadan University of Medical Sciences.

In this study, SPSS-21 software and descriptive statistics methods include mean, median, standard deviation, charts and tables and also inferential statistical methods include independent T-test, Chi-square, Pearson correlation coefficient, regression methods include linear regression and logistic regression were used to analyze the data.

## Results

In this research, 175 nursing students of Medical Sciences Colleges of Shushtar and Abadan University of Medical Sciences were participated in the study, the results of which were collected in two descriptive and analytical parts. Eighty people (45.7%) were from Medical Sciences Colleges of Shushtar and 95 people (54.3%) were from Medical Sciences Colleges of Abadan. Personal features of participants are shown in Table 1. Based on this table, 15.5 % of people did not pass the professional ethical unit and 23.7% have not ever participated in any professional ethical



Table 1. Demographic information in nursing students of Shushtar Colleges and University of Medical Sciences Abadan in 2018

Variable	State	Frequency (Percentage)
Number of students	Shushtar	80(45.7%)
	Abadan	95(54.3%)
Sex	Female	113(64.6%)
	Male	62(35.4%)
Term	4	2(1.1%)
	5	29(16.7%)
	6	57(32.8%)
	7	15(8.6%)
	8	71(40.8%)
Marital status	Single	155(88.6%)
	Married	20(11.4%)
Passing the professional ethics unit	No	27(15.5%)
	Yes	147(84.5%)
History of participating in a professional ethics workshop	Not Have	41(23.7%)
	Have	132(76.3%)
Work experience in the field of nursing	Not have	6(4.4%)
	Have	131(95.6%)

workshops. The findings of the present study show that there is no significant difference in students' moral sensitivity based on the semester and the level of interest of individuals.

According to Table 2, the mean of moral sensitivity in all studied people was equal to 86.86. Also, the mean point of nursing students of Medical Sciences College of Shushtar was more than the students of Medical Sciences University

of Abadan.

The average score of moral sensitivity in nursing students of Shushtar Colleges of Medical Sciences was higher than nursing students of Abadan Colleges of Medical Sciences. (P-value = 0.843) (Table 2).

Descriptive indices of quantitative variables in nursing students of Medical Sciences Colleges of Shushtar and Abadan town in 2018 are

Table 2. The comparison of moral sensitivity among nursing student in Abadan University of Medical Sciences and Shushtar College in 2018

College	Number of Students	Moral Sensitivity (Average ± SD)	95% Confidence Interval		P-Value
			Low limit	Upper line	
Shushtar	80	87.14 ± 18.57	83.069	91.21	0.843
Abadan	93	86.62 ± 15.54	83.46	89.77	
Total	173	86.86 ± 16.96	84.33	89.38	

Table 3. Descriptive index of quantitative variables in nursing students of Shushtar Colleges and University of Medical Sciences Abadan in 2018

Variable	Number	Mean (±SD)	Minimum	Maximum
Age	175	22.98 (±2.11)	20	38
Moral sensitivity	175	86.86 (±16.96)	27	156

demonstrated in Table 3. The average score of moral sensitivity in nursing students of Shushtar Colleges of Medical Sciences was higher than nursing students of Abadan Colleges of Medical Sciences.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine and compare the level of moral sensitivity among the nursing students of the Medical Sciences Colleges in Shushtar and Abadan in 2018 and the findings of the study indicated that there is not a significant difference in sensitivity and the intensity of distress based on academic term and interest rate of people.

Moral sensitivity as a foundation and cornerstone of nursing ethics makes a context for nurses to be able to have effective and ethical care of patients and meanwhile make them sensitive in the face of ethical issues in their professional environment that causes trust and insurance for patients in the term of nursing cares [15]. Thus, moral sensitivity and emotional responsibility are so important, especially for those who offer their clinical care for patients based on ethical values. Consideration of the importance of moral sensitivity in making ethical decisions causes prevention in case of irreparable damages imposed on patients and the care system due to non-consideration of nursing professional ethical principles [16].

Lack of moral sensitivity violates ethical

situations for correct decision-making into ethical challenges and has different consequences for patients, families, treatment team members and in some cases the health system and society [12]. They may feel tension and frustration at work and experience professional dissatisfaction and endanger their social relationships, including interactions with the patient and his family [16]. A direct result of this situation with worry is emotional stress which can appear as anger, guilt, hopelessness, desire to give up a job, loss of self-confidence, depression, and anxiety that can even cause emotional exhaustion and breakdown [13]. Kohansal et al. [14] reported the average moral sensitivity of nursing students at a moderate level. The highest mean was related to "honesty and benevolence" and the lowest was due to "professional knowledge" and "applying ethical concepts in ethical decision making" ( $P < 0.01$ ). Lee and Kim reported low mean moral sensitivity of nursing students in a cross-sectional study and noted that moral sensitivity is the first step and fundamental component of ethical practice and plays a significant role in ethical decision-making [15]. Park et al. [16] showed that the moral sensitivity of nursing students in the first year was lower than the last year students and the mean score of moral sensitivity of both groups was low and this necessitates paying attention to the ethics course for students.

Moral sensitivity is an important problem for nursing students' clinical decision making and in



the future, a nurse influences the quality of patient care(6). Nursing faculty members must train students with the ability to make ethical decisions because it is one of the major components of nursing ethical decision making and this is not obtained unless all ethical components of these decisions are obtained and moral sensitivity is the most important part and their moral sensitivity must be strengthened. It is required that students' moral sensitivity be examined and facilitating factors or possible barriers to the growth of this component also be identified. It seems that researchers can achieve reflective results in this regard. In fact, determining moral sensitivity can help managers, faculty members of nursing and midwifery faculties and they can plan to enhance and improve moral sensitivity. This will help and subsequently help them make the right ethical decisions in the clinical setting. Limitations of the study included not passing the nursing ethics course and unwillingness to participate in the study. It is suggested that in order to increase the moral sensitivity of nurses, they should be trained and evaluated from their first days of studying.

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