

Moral and Psychological Distress Among Nurses

Grace Qamer Elemetry¹ BSN, M.A., RN, PhD(c),
Daniel Sperling¹, S.J.D., B.A. (Philosophy)

¹Department of Nursing, Faculty of Social and Health Sciences, University of Haifa

Background

Moral distress has been recognized as nurses' most serious, urgent and major problem with medium to high prevalence among all nurses working in different settings.

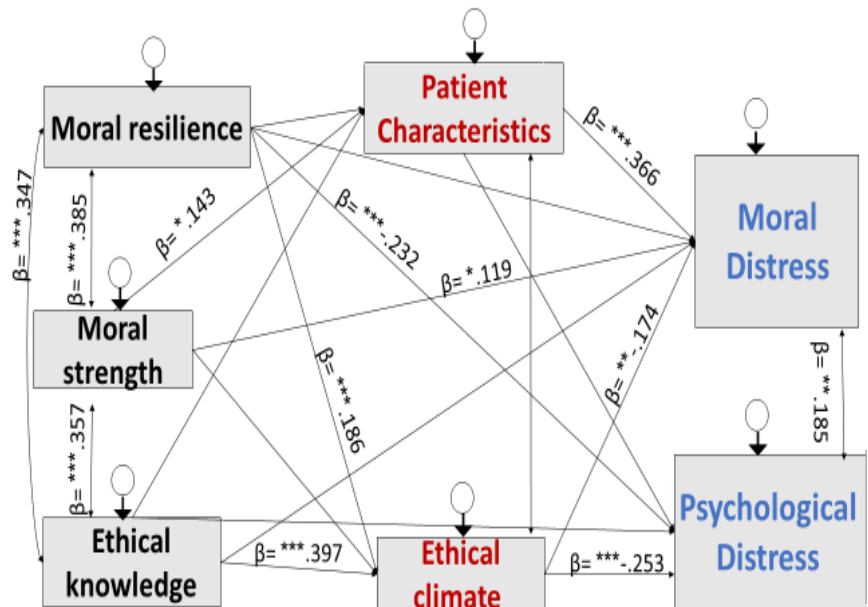
Research aims

1. To assess the prevalence, severity, and frequency of moral distress.
2. To examine the potential **mediating effect** of ethical climate and patient characteristics.

Methods

- A quantitative cross-sectional study.
- **307** registered nurses working in hospitals and community institutions in Israel.
- Data were analyzed using path analysis.

Results



The mean total severity–frequency score for moral distress was relatively **low** ($M = 26.52$, $SD = 19.43$).

- **Ethical knowledge** had merely indirect effect on both outcomes through mediation of ethical climate.
- Ethical climate fully mediated the negative association between **moral resilience** and moral distress and partially mediated the relationship between moral resilience and psychological distress.
- Nurses' **moral strength** is associated with moral distress mainly through patient characteristics.

Discussion and conclusions

Organizations should enhance nurses' ethical climate, such as with ethics committees, ethics consultations, and transparent communication channels.