

Purpose

- Describe nurses' experience of moral distress when providing end-of-life care for infants and their families

Background

- The survival rate of infants in South Korea is less than that of Japan and the United States.
- NICU nurses frequently experience death of pediatric patients and related moral distress.
- Moral distress - Psychological response to morally challenging situations including moral constraint or moral conflict.
- Moral constraint - Occurs when an individual knows but is unable to pursue the right course of action
- Moral conflict - Situation where moral values clash within multiple individuals.

Methods

- Design** - Secondary analysis qualitative study
- Sample** - 20 nurses working in two neonatal intensive care units in Seoul, Korea.
- Analysis** - Conventional content analysis was performed to develop a codebook and to identify themes regarding the contents.
- Rigor** - Obtained by having peer-debriefing, and audit trail throughout the data management and analysis

Results

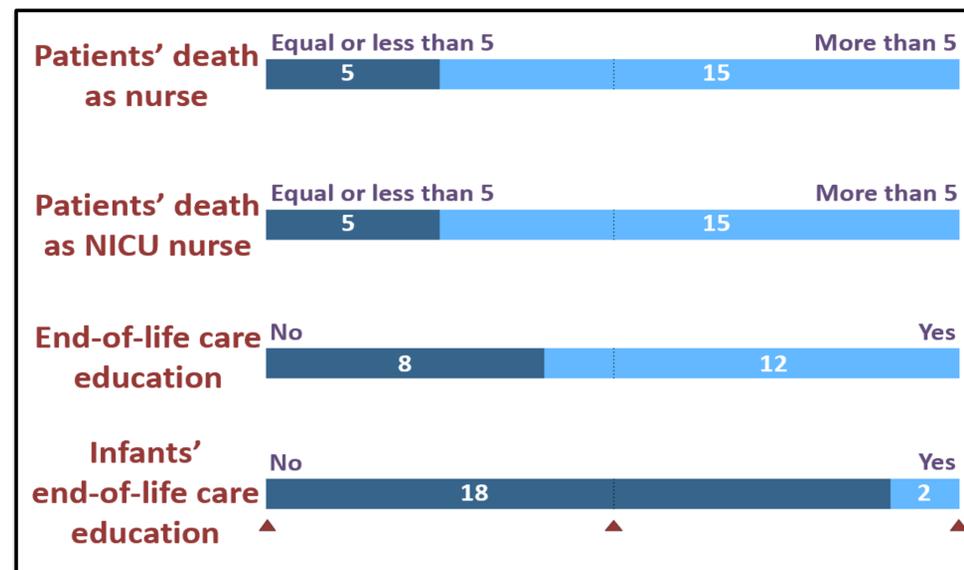


Figure 1. Characteristics of NICU nurses (Number = Frequency)

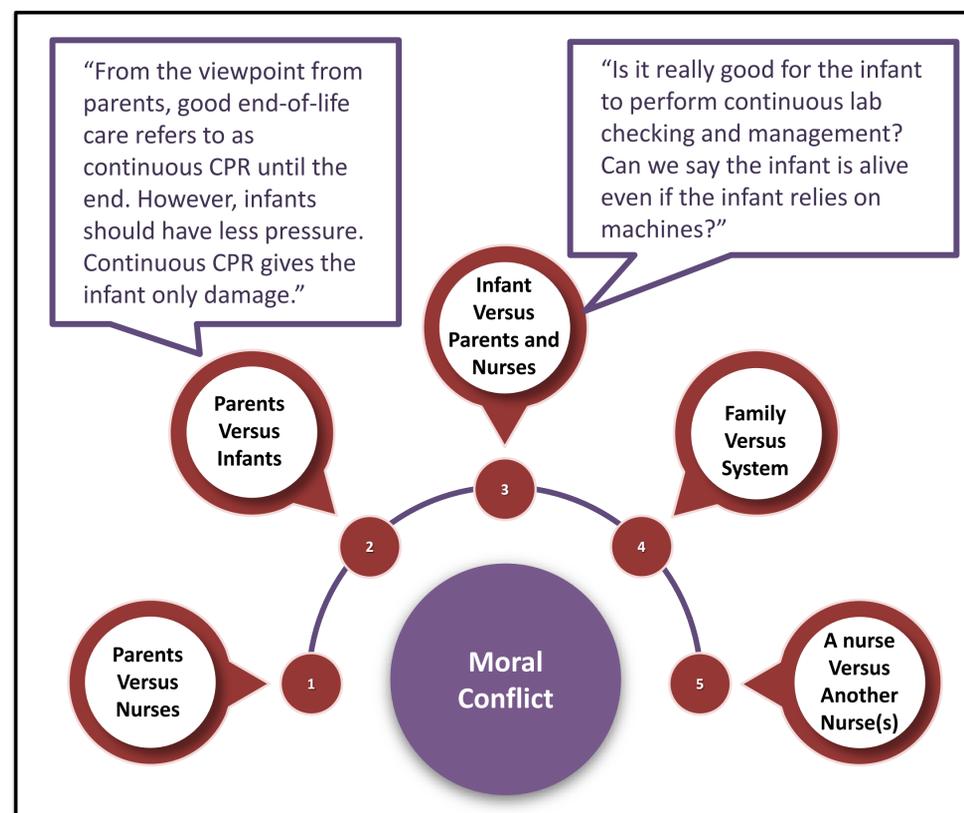


Figure 2. Types of moral conflict identified from the nurses

Table 1. Internal and external moral constraints

Main Theme: Subtheme	Exemplar
Internal : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perceived inadequacy Different perception towards quality end-of-life care 	"Even though we are clinicians, we are around 20 or 30's, young people. So, we have not experienced the death of people around us. This lack of experience, we cannot emphasize very well. I think we need to get educated."
External : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental factors 	"I think we need to occupy a larger space. Now, the place is too crowded, so all people visiting here should stand." "The problem is busy work. So, there is no time to take care of the infant's parents."

Conclusions and Implications

- The situations causing the most moral distress were when nurses lacked knowledge about end-of-life care and when a nurse had to practice given a limited, uncontrollable environment regardless of what they wished to pursue.
- The results emphasize the importance of education for NICU nurses.
- Moral distress can be alleviated by inviting nurses to a decision-making process.

Acknowledgement

- Seattle University College of Nursing (Dean's Seed Grant)
- Seattle University - Summer Faculty Fellowship
- University of Washington School of Nursing (Jeanne Beneliol Fellowship, Tripi Scholarship)