

Thesis Title Ethical Dilemmas Experienced by Nurses in
 Intensive Care Units in Medan, Indonesia

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Abstract

The purpose of this hermeneutic phenomenological study was to describe and explain ethical dilemmas experienced by nurses in intensive care units in Medan, Indonesia and the resolutions arrived at by nurses when dealing with these ethical dilemmas. Ten participants from two public teaching hospitals in Medan were involved in this study. The data collection process was performed from December 2001 to March 2002. Data were collected by in-depth interviews with tape recordings. Colaizzi's method was modified for data analysis. The findings were as follows:

The general meaning of ethical dilemma was described as: (1) how to choose between two choices, and (2) a problem that cannot be resolved. Ethical dilemmas experienced by intensive care unit nurses were described as (1) continue or stop treatment, (2) who should get the ventilator, (3) want to take an action but beyond authority, (4) to tell or not to tell the truth, and (5) acting as patient advocate versus maintaining relationships with the health team. Participants' feelings when they faced ethical dilemmas were: (1) confusion, (2)
(3)

discomfort, (3) uncertainty, and (4) powerlessness. And the resolutions used by participants when dealing with the ethical dilemmas included: (1) consultation with doctor and/or nurse supervisors, (2) discussion with colleagues, (3) performing professional interventions, and (4) religious practices.

The findings of this study provide important information regarding ethical dilemmas and the resolutions experienced by nurses in intensive care units in Indonesia. This information can be used as baseline data to improve ethical decision making skills of nurses. It can be used by nurse educators as baseline data in teaching ethics for students or nurses and can also provide data for future research to develop tools to assess ethical dilemmas in nursing in Indonesia.