

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The descriptive study was designed to explore the ethical dilemmas and ethical decision making of nursing students in providing care for patients with mental illness in North Sumatra, Indonesia. Subjects were recruited from four Diploma III nursing programs existing in North Sumatra including in Medan, Langkat, and Sidikalang. The subjects comprised 176 nursing students and were recruited by random sampling. They were asked to respond to three questionnaires, i.e., the Personal Data Questionnaire (PDQ), the Ethical Dilemmas Questionnaire (EDQ), and the Ethical Decision Making Questionnaire (EDMQ). The resulting data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. In this chapter, a summary of the findings of the study, implications of the findings, as well as recommendations are presented.

#### *Summary of Study Findings*

Most subjects in this study were female (83.5%) with the mean age of 21.14 years. Most were ethnically Batak (63.6%). The religious background of the subjects were Islam (52.3%), Protestant (43.2%), and the rest (4.5%) were Catholic and others.

All of the subjects (100%) had been taught ethics in caring for mentally ill patients. A combination of lecture and discussion (39.2%) was the most common method that had been used to teach the subjects.

The level of frequency of ethical dilemmas for all of the items in this study was found to be at the moderate level. The highest mean score of frequency, and also

disturbance of ethical dilemmas of nursing students in providing care for patients with mental illness was found for advocating for patients vs. lack of authority.

The findings of the study showed that the two highest frequency of ethical dilemmas were: (1) advocating for patients vs. lack of authority (mean = 1.86, SD = .48), and (2) professional obligations vs. protecting oneself from risk (mean = 1.79, SD = .45). Meanwhile, the two highest ethical dilemmas of greatest disturbance were: (1) advocating for patients vs. lack of authority (mean = 1.56, SD = .59), and (2) intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary conflicts (mean = 1.52, SD = .63).

Furthermore, the overall frequency of ethical decision making used by students in providing care for patients with mental illness were at a moderate level. Of the three model of ethical decision making, the highest mean score was for the bureaucratic-centered model (mean = 1.79, SD = .45), followed by the physician-centered model (mean = 1.74, SD = .51), and lastly the patient-centered model (mean = 1.70, SD = .40):

The study demonstrated that nursing students needed to develop the skill and knowledge to recognize ethical dilemmas, and to be active participants in demonstrating critical thinking in ethical decision making. The educators in nursing schools have an important role in guiding nursing students to develop their ability and skills in ethical decision making. Also, ethics education is a fundamental factor for nursing students to resolve effectively ethical dilemmas in psychiatric hospitals.

## *Implications and Recommendations*

### *Nursing education*

One of the objectives of an ethics course, stated in the curriculum of Diploma III nursing program, is to enhance the students abilities' to identify ethical dilemmas, and to be familiar with models of ethical decision making. In practice, they can demonstrate their ability to use ethical decision making relating to ethical dilemmas in nursing practice.

The results of this study indicated that nursing students would not be able to avoid such ethical dilemmas when performing nursing practice in the psychiatric hospital. However, the ethical dilemmas facing by nursing students: in the performance of nursing practice for mentally ill patients are slightly different from other areas of nursing practice. They generally face ethical dilemmas related to the patient's behavior which may be harmful and may cause risk for them, as well as for the patient him or her self. On the other hand, the students are required to provide a good quality of nursing care for the patients. Therefore, it is recommended that nurse educators should provide the students with an understanding of ethical dilemmas and adherence to ethical theories and principles when providing care for mentally ill patients.

The results revealed that, generally, nursing students are lack autonomy and self-confidence, in solving problems with ethical dilemmas when providing care for patients with mental illness. Therefore, it is recommended that the nurse educators, clinical instructors, and head nurses offer the students more opportunity to make such ethical decisions by themselves. This will increase the self-confidence and autonomy

of the nursing students. On the other hand, it was found that ethical decision making based on the bureaucratic-centered model was of the highest frequency used by the students. This indicates their instructors are accessible to the nursing students and that they also can learn more from their knowledgeable instructors, educators, or head nurses who share their knowledge and experiences. The findings, therefore, suggest that ethical issues should be given to nursing students to build their awareness of ethical dilemmas, and to develop their ability to analyze ethical dilemmas in clinical practice.

#### *Nursing research*

The findings of the study are expected to be useful for further research. It should be worthwhile to carry out a more specific study of the influencing factors of ethical dilemmas facing nursing students.

It is recommended conduct further study be conducted in detail (1) using descriptive correctional design to trace the relationship between teaching method and ethical dilemmas, (2) develop teaching method to enhance ethical decision making, (3) conduct a study using scenario to ask which ethical decision making model nursing students use when facing ethical dilemmas in clinical practice.