

Public Health Nursing Ethics in Islamic Perspectives

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Abstract—All nurses, regardless of their specialties, face ethical challenges on a daily basis. Serious ethical issues in which decision making is highly required include informed consent, patient's privacy and information confidentiality.

Public health nurses work with communities and population. They are usually involved in various situations that need ethical and moral judgments. Examples of these situations include health care reform, HIV/AIDS, right to die, stem cell research, and the use of screening programs.

Public health nursing does not have a separate Code from the American Nursing Association Code, but they acknowledge the Principles of the Ethical Practice of Public Health and the Scope and Standards of Public Health Nursing as additional guides to ethical practice. In summary the ethical practice for public health nurses refers to practice that “preserves, protects, and promotes the autonomy, dignity, and rights of the population or community”

Similar principle is rooted in Islamic religion since Islam has made the preservation and conservation of human life rank second after preservation of religion. Thus, Islam has prohibited killing a human being except for mandated legal retribution (*Qasas*), and has forbidden assault on human beings.

The holy Quran refers to saving the life of a human irrespective of social class, race, and religion, and insists on exemption of patients from physical activity, including the physical aspects of prayer. Some warnings are offered in relation to fake drugs, the lack of awareness of some physicians, the need for complete preparedness of medical society, and the need to manufacture appropriate drugs and offer a suitable medical service. On the other hand, Islam considers access to health care as a fundamental right of the individual. In public health, there are sometimes difficult decision-making options for the patient's care.