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Innovative approach to the ethics in health care organizations: Health staff perspective

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Abstract

Ethics in health care services, especially for the health staff, has been an important topic of the quality improvement in health care organizations. It is argued that there must be some ethic rules based on patient rights and these rules must be obtained by health care professionals. In a health care service process, nursing services take more duration than of physicians. Thus, ethics rules are mentioned mainly for the health staff. The other important recent topic of health care system is innovation concept. Innovation may be applied in many fields such as equipment, personnel, method or physical environment. However, there has been not any research on innovation of ethic rules for the health organizations. For this reason, it is aimed in this research to evaluate ethic rules in health organizations in perspective of innovation concept. Results of the study showed that ethics rules must be developed based on change in sociality including legislation, and knowledge, while some of them must remain.

Keywords: Ethics; Health Management; Health Staff.

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1. Introduction

Ethics in the health organizations is topic of both qualities in health care and human rights (Cook RJ, Dickens 2007; Cook, Dickens 1999; Giacomini ,Kenny,DeJean, 2009; Hoedemaekers ,Dekkers,2003; J. Danis M, Clancy C, Churchill 2002).In human rights perspective, all people must have rights for ethics rules in health services(Fox, Swazey ,Examining American bioethics,2005; Backof,& Martin, 1991; L. London 2005).For the health care management, ethic rules and obtaining them improve quality in health care services by increasing quality of relational capital which is a component of intellectual capital of organizations.

There are some ethics rules for the health organizations must be obtain by health professionals(Veatch, 2006; Tsai, 1999 ;Ladou, Tennenhouse, Feitshans, 2002), especially health staff which are more closely related with patients. These rules may be changed depending on type of the society in which health organization operates. However, some main approaches are similar to different societies (Pellegrino E. 2006)

Developing of technology have been changing structures of societies. Globalisation and global public approaches show that traditional rules of the different societies are getting closer and ethic rules for the different societies change depending on change in social life.

In the research, an innovative approach to the ethics rules in health care services is examined. The main argument of the research is that ethic rules in health services must be innovative and a developing structure. To examine this argument, a survey was applied to the health workers of Istanbul Mehmet Akif Ersoy Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery Training and Research Hospital, and their opinions on ethics and its relation with innovation are evaluated.

2. Literature Survey

2.1. *Ethics in health services*

Ethics in health services is part of patient rights and health service staff job satisfaction. Health and health services are important relations of the society. In a treatment period, first of all, patient and its relations must trust their physician and staff giving services to them. Some researchers argue that ethic rules also affect success of the treatment given by the health professionals. Physiologic approaches support this argument, and patients safety with ethic rules provides a qualified health care service(Chatterjee, Srinivasan, 2012; Backof, & Martin, (1991; Enthoven,1993; Westerholm 2006; Silverman, ,2000; Tsai,1999; Ladou, Tennenhouse, Feitshans, 2003).

2.2. *Innovation and its continuity*

Innovation is a new concept of the management literature. In fact, there have been innovative approaches in management science from the past, however, only two or three decades before literature has mentioned on innovative as a managerial concept. New things are not always called developments. Change in a current state may be an innovation, yet it does not mean it is a profitable development. In addition, continuity of the innovation is related to its profitability. Thus, in order to provide a continuous innovation, it must give benefits to the organization in which innovation approaches are applied.

2.3. Ethics as innovative perspective

Ethics and ethic rules are known as norms of the society, and they are stable. However, recent researches on ethics have showed that ethic rules depend on society in which they are applied, and change in understanding of ethics in a society may change depending on changes in the society. In addition, technologic developments also affect society and thus ethic rules. For example, mobile phone and its privative value was not an ethic rule before its invention. Similarly, collection of data related to patients, their use and share was not an ethic issue before communication technology developments.

2.4. Ethics in Health Care Services

Although there are many applications including ethics rules in health care services, there have not been sufficient source focusing on ethics as innovative perspective (Bankowski, 1996; Bryant, Kauser, Hyder, 1997; Mann, Gostin, Gruskin, Brennan, Lazzarini, Finberg, 1994; Sen, Germain, Chen 1994; Bankowski, Bryant, 1994). Current understanding in health care services is to enlighten place and importance of ethics rules in health care services and organizations. On the other hand, social knowledge shows that ethics rules must be also changed based on changes in sociality.

3. Methodology

The research is designed in descriptive pattern. In this method, a current statute of the topic is enlightened by both qualitative and quantitative findings. For this aim, a survey method was applied to health staff (n=96) working in Istanbul Training and Research Hospital. In the survey, their opinion on ethics and its innovation for the health services are asked. Results are evaluated, and further suggestions are given for both researchers and field professionals. A brief personal information form including age, sex, education, experience, and education organization in which ethic educations were taken asked to the respondents. In addition, 15 questions were asked given in the Table 1.

Table 1. Questions asked in the Questionnaire

Questions and factors
Ethics in general
1. I can solve ethic problems with help of taken education
2. I believe I need to take more ethic education.
3. I need ethic committee in my organization.
4. I notice an ethic conflict with help of my knowledge taken from education.
5. I notice an ethic conflict after noticing of a conflict in myself.
6. I notice an ethic conflict after noticing of a conflict in social values.
7. I notice an ethic conflict after noticing of a conflict in legislations.
8. I notice an ethic conflict after somebody notices me.
9. I think ethic conflicts affect my performance.

Innovation of ethics

10. Ethic rules must change depend on sociality.
 11. Ethic rules must change depend on technology.
 12. Ethic rules must change depend on legislations.
 13. Ethic rules must change depend on knowledge.
 14. Ethic rules must change themselves.
 15. Ethic rules must change depend on conflicts.
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Nine questions are related to ethics in general. In this part, respondents were asked to how they solve ethic problems, and notice an ethic conflict. Other six questions were asked to examine how ethic rules may change depending on factors. Since research is designed in descriptive pattern, questions were analyzed using Frequency Analysis. Factor analysis (Principle Component Analysis) and Reliability Analysis were not performed since answers given to the questions were examined in demographic form.

4. Results

Baseline characteristics of participants are given in the Table 2.

Table 2. Baseline characteristics of participants

Properties	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Gender		
Male	18	18,8
Female	78	81,3
Age		
25 and younger	27	28,1
26-30	24	25,0
31-35	36	37,5
36-40	3	3,1
31 and older	6	6,3
Education		
High school	24	25,0
Institute	33	34,4
Faculty	24	25,0
Postgraduate	15	15,6
Experience		
0-5	54	56,3
6-10	6	6,3
11-15	21	21,9
16 and over	15	15,6

Education taken in		
High school	39	40,6
Faculty	48	50,0
Other	9	9,4

According to the Table 1, 18,8% of respondents were male, and 81,3% female. Age distribution of the respondents showed that they were at the young age fewer than 36 in general. For education distribution, 25,0% of respondents were graduated from high school, 34,4% of institute, 25,0% of faculty, and 15,6% of respondents were graduated from postgraduate programs. Generally, respondents had 5 years or fewer experience. These findings were parallel to age results. Totally, 90,6% of respondents had ethics educations in schools or universities. Results for answers given to questions are given in the Table 3.

Table 3. Questionnaire answer results

Items	Strongly disagree		Disagree		No idea		Agree		Strongly agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1. I can solve ethic problems with help of taken education			9	9,4	18	18,8	57	59,4	12	12,5
2. I believe I need to take more ethic education.	3	3,1	18	18,8	21	21,9	54	56,3		
3. I need ethic committee in my organization.	6	6,3	3	3,1	18	18,8	48	50,0	21	21,9
4. I notice an ethic conflict with help of my knowledge taken from education.			9	9,4	12	12,5	66	68,8	9	9,4
5. I notice an ethic conflict after noticing of a conflict in myself.	9	9,4	15	15,6	6	6,3	60	62,5	6	6,3
6. I notice an ethic conflict after noticing of a conflict in social values.	6	6,3	18	18,8	21	21,9	51	53,1		
7. I notice an ethic conflict after noticing of a conflict in legislations.	3	3,1	18	18,8	21	21,9	51	53,1	3	3,1
8. I notice an ethic conflict after somebody notices me.	12	12,5	42	43,8	9	9,4	33	34,4		
9. I think ethic conflicts affect my performance.			12	12,5	21	21,9	57	59,4	6	6,3
10. Ethic rules must change depend on sociality.	3	3,1	6	6,3	24	25,0	57	59,4	6	6,3
11. Ethic rules must change depend on technology.	3	3,1	6	6,3	36	37,5	51	53,1		
12. Ethic rules must change depend on legislations.			3	3,1	15	15,6	72	75,0	6	6,3
13. Ethic rules must change depend on knowledge.			6	6,3	3	3,1	72	75,0	15	15,6

14. Ethic rules must change themselves.	30	31,3	7	7,3	4	4,2	50	52,1	5	5,2
15. Ethic rules must change depend on conflicts.	30	31,3	3	3,1	21	21,9	29	30,2	13	13,6

Table 3 shows that answers given to the first seven items are in agreement with respondents. In other words, respondents generally agree solving of problems with help of taken education (59,4%), they need more ethic education (56,3%), and need an ethic committee in their organization (50,0%). These results show that education is the most important device to educate personnel for ethic rules.

For noticing of an ethic conflict, they use education they take (68,8%), noticing conflict in themselves (62,5%), noticing conflict in social values (53,1%), and noticing conflict in legislations (53,1%). They expressed that they rarely notice an ethic conflict after somebody notice them (43,8%). In addition, they think that ethic conflicts affect their performance (59,4%). Similar to results above, noticing of an ethic conflict is also easier with taking of educations.

For innovation in ethics, respondents expressed that ethic rules must change depend on sociality (59,4%), technology (53,1%), legislations (75,0%), knowledge (75,0%), and themselves (52,%). Respondents' general idea on change of ethic rules with conflict is fewer (31,3%). In other words, they think that ethic rules must not change depend on conflicts. Interestingly, most of the participants think that ethic rules may be changed, mainly depend on legislation and knowledge.

In literature, it is known that ethic rules depend on societies, and changes depending on social changes. However, effects of technology on ethic rules in health organizations have not been researched yet, and there is a requirement to improve ethic approach to health organizations. Thus, opinions of health care service workers showed in the research that technology brings some new social rules, and they must be evaluated in ethics perspectives.

Results of the research showed that ethics and its rules in health organizations must be developed based on structure of the society in which the organization operates. They must include legislation statutes, knowledge base of the society, and technological developments. These changes must be strategically managed by mentioning patient and health staff opinions. Current applications are helpful and give contribution to the quality in health care services. However, some parts of the applications are not sufficient for the changes occurring in social norms. For this reason, changes in society and its structure must be well understood, and innovations according to these changes may be reflected to ethics in health organizations.

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