

Dignity as a Guiding Principle in Nursing Management: A Multicenter Qualitative Study Protocol

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Introduction. Dignity represents a fundamental ethical principle of the nursing profession. Although widely considered a guiding value in patient care, its managerial and organizational dimension remains underexplored, particularly in strategic decision-making, human resource management and nursing leadership. Nurse managers play a key role in translating ethical principles into organizational practices that influence workplace climate, professional well-being, and quality of care. This study aims to explore the meaning attributed to dignity in nursing management and how it shapes decision-making, organizational, and relational practices.

Methods. This protocol describes a qualitative, multicenter, non-interventional study that adopts an interpretative phenomenological approach. Nurse managers working in various Italian healthcare organizations will be recruited through a purposive sampling method. Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews aimed at exploring how dignity is perceived and implemented in managerial practice. Interviews will be recorded in audio format, transcribed faithfully, and analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Results. The study is currently recruiting participants and aims to provide insights into how nursing managers interpret and integrate dignity into leadership practices and organizational processes.

Discussion. Understanding dignity as a guiding principle in nursing management can promote the development of leadership models and organizational strategies based on ethical principles, aimed at improving workforce well-being and quality of care.

Keywords: Dignity, Ethics, Nursing Leadership, Ethical Leadership, Nursing Management

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