

When is it ethically responsible to leave a job or leave the profession

[Health & Medicine](#), [Nursing](#)



Ethical responsibility to leave a job or leave the profession Health care facilities around the globe are experiencing nursing shortages, with a large number of young registered nurses expressing the willingness to exit from the profession (Flinkman & Isopahkala-Bouret et al, 2013). Nurses' work content is demanding, which is a factor that leads to the development of ethical dilemmas associated with their inability to provide proper and humane care to their patients (White, 2002). The ethical dilemmas can be a precursor to ethics-related stress, which relates to their knowledge in determining the right course to take in the provision of healthcare services, but they experience constraints in carrying out these actions.

Some of the consequences of the creation of ethical stress include the fact that the nurses might be experiencing frustration, physical illness, and interpersonal conflict. These consequences might prompt them to leave their position or the profession altogether. A study by Ulrich and O'Donnell...et al, (2007) indicates that about 80% of oncology nurses had high ethical stress scores due to the conflicts existing between their obligations towards patients and the rules in the organization. With some of the organizational values in a health care setting being the provision of adequate patient care, the ethical climate in this case is not representative of the shared care perceptions (Chan et al, 2013). This might prompt a nurse to leave the position, considering that the ethical decision-making processes are not reflective of the human values and interactions.

On the other hand, Flinkman, Isopahkala-Bouret and Salanterä's research on the ethical responsibility of nurses to leave their profession indicates that their inability to offer proper care is a contradiction to their ambitions and

talent (Flinkman et al, 2013). Scott et al (2008) reports that a large number of nursing graduates leave the profession due to poor working environments. Despite this fact, it would be appropriate for nurses to leave the profession when their moral obligations contradict those upheld by medical institutions since they might not be in a good position to offer their services properly (Morrell, 2005).

References

- Chan, Z. C., Tam, W. S., Lung, M. K., Wong, W. Y. & Chau, C. W. (2013). A systematic literature review of nurse shortage and the intention to leave. *Journal of Nursing Management*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 605–613.
- Flinkman, M., Isopahkala-Bouret, U., & Salanterä, S. (2013). Young registered nurses' intention to leave the profession and professional turnover in early career: A quantitative case study. *International scholarly research notices*, pp 1-12
- Gordon, S., & Nelson, S. (2005) An end to angels. *American Journal of Nursing*, vol. 105, no. 5, pp. 62–69.
- Morrell, K. (2005). Towards a typology of nursing turnover: the role of shocks in nurses decisions to leave. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 315–322.
- Price, S. (2009). Future directions for career choice research in nursing: a discussion paper. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, pp. 268–276.
- Scott, E. S., Keehner Engelke, M. & Swanson, M. (2008) New graduate nurse transitioning: necessary or nice? *Applied Nursing Research*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 75–83.

Ulrich, C., O'Donnell, P., Taylor, C., Farrar, A., Danis, M. & Grady, C. (2007). Ethical climate, ethical stress, and the job satisfaction of nurses and social workers in the United States. Retrieved from: [http://www. ncbi. nlm. nih. gov/pmc/articles/PMC2442035/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2442035/)

White, K. (2002). Nursing as vocation. *Nursing Ethics*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 279–290.