

UNIVERSITY OF SWAZILAND
FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

FINAL EXAMINATION PAPER DECEMBER 2008

TITLE: ETHICAL ISSUES, DILEMMAS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN MENTAL HEALTH NURSING

COURSE : NUR 451

DURATION : TWO (2) HOURS

MARKS : 75

- INSTRUCTIONS:**
- 1. ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS**
 - 2. EACH QUESTION CARRIES 25 MARKS**

THIS PAPER IS NOT TO BE OPENED UNTIL PERMISSION HAS BEEN GIVEN BY THE INVIGILATOR

QUESTION 1**Multiple choice questions.**

Choose the correct answer and indicate your response by writing the letter corresponding to the correct answer next to the appropriate question number e.g. 47=r. (1 point each)

1. According to the Code of Professional Nursing Conduct for Swaziland, the protection of a patient's rights and safety
 - a) Allows the nurse to refuse to participate in morally questionable research projects
 - b) Prohibits intervening, through established protocols, in the impaired practice of other care givers
 - c) Permits breaking of confidentiality, if the nurse finds a patient's behaviours personally offensive
 - d) Is not the responsibility of nurse administrators

2. A patient receiving palliative care for metastatic cancer of the breast begins asking for increased dosages of morphine for her pain, beyond what the physician has ordered. The nurse is wary of over medicating for fear of hastening the patient's death. The nurse should
 - a) Accept the patient's report of pain and give dosages to the maximum allowed by the order
 - b) Try to convince the patient to hold back on morphine in order to preserve her decision-making skills and hence her autonomy
 - c) Give the maximum amount of morphine ordered and call the physician to increase the dose to minimize the patient's pain and help hasten her death
 - d) Give the maximum amount of morphine ordered and call the physician to increase the dose in order to achieve the patient's comfort

3. A nurse-midwife has been through lectures for assisted forceps delivery but has not had a patient for forceps delivery since the lectures. The delivery ward is understaffed on that day and a patient requiring forceps delivery presents. The nurse is uncomfortable with her knowledge base but has the forceps delivery orientation book with her. According to the Code of Practice, which of the following actions should the nurse take in this scenario?
 - a) Recognize her knowledge-base deficit and so should make management aware and refuse to do the procedure
 - b) Make management aware of her concerns and should not take the assignment unless an experienced midwife on forceps delivery is available to work with her until she feels she can provide safe care
 - c) Since she knows that the ward is understaffed, she should take the assignment despite her concerns
 - d) As long as she has the forceps delivery book guide with her, she should perform the procedure

4. The Code of Ethics does not include which of the following
 - a) respect for persons regardless of health problems or economic status
 - b) respect only for those receiving nursing care
 - c) support for patients' rights to self-determination
 - d) supportive care for those in the dying process

5. The ability to form an opinion and draw conclusions is
 - a) judgement
 - b) insight
 - c) responsibility
 - d) competence

6. According to deontology
 - a) a good act conforms to agreed rules and guidelines of what constitutes good
 - b) a good act is enacted through others
 - c) a good act requires obtaining all necessary information in order to make the right decision
 - d) A good act is defined by its consequences

7. The following statements are true of an ethical dilemma except
 - a) it is a problem for which there is no satisfactory solution
 - b) it is a situation in which a choice must be made between two equally unsatisfactory alternatives
 - c) it is a situation or problem which can be satisfactorily resolved
 - d) it basically involves two conflicting moral claims

8. The following statement best describes the ethical principle of autonomy
 - a) actions taken should not pose unacceptable risk of harm to the patient
 - b) allowing a competent patient, if fully informed, to make a wrong decision
 - c) actions taken should benefit the patient and not necessarily conform to patient choice
 - d) informing a partner of the threat and intent to kill her made by a spouse

9. Macro-allocation of resources is an ethical concept that is concerned with the
 - a) individual
 - b) family
 - c) society
 - d) household

10. When assisting patients and their families to make decisions that involve ethical dilemmas. Nurses must first
 - a) clarify their own values in relation to the moral issues
 - b) refrain from imposing their own values on patients and families
 - c) understand ethical theories and principles before making decisions
 - d) elicit the thoughts and feelings of patients and significant others.

11. The right to decide what will be done with one's person or body is
 - a) autonomy
 - b) privacy
 - c) fidelity
 - d) veracity

12. Informed consent may be given by whom
 - a) A 21-year old after 3 glasses of wine and a 6 pack of beer
 - b) A 13-year old for the circumcision of her newborn son
 - c) A 54-year old mentally challenged resident
 - d) A nurse taking care of a client in an emergency

13. Non-maleficence requires the nurse to
 - a) Tell the truth
 - b) Provide positive actions to help others
 - c) First do no harm
 - d) Answer for one's actions.

14. A student nurse mistakenly gives aminophylline instead of acetaminophen. The student nurse
 - a) is held to the same standard and legal limits as a registered nurse
 - b) fills out an incident report and never administers medication again
 - c) notifies the supervising physician and cries, begs and pleas for another chance
 - d) should not have administered medications till graduation

15. Which of the following is not an ethical practice
 - a) Obtaining informed consent prior to starting the research project
 - b) Sharing your data with other organizations that have a legitimate interest in your research
 - c) Keeping data under lock and key
 - d) \using pseudonyms to protect participants identity

16. Which of the following is not appropriate to include in a research participant's "informed consent" form
 - a) The names and contact details of other people participating in the project
 - b) The aims of the project
 - c) Information about how research data will be used
 - d) The name and contact details of the researcher

17. Egoism, by definition
 - a) Is the ultimate good of an individual's interest
 - b) Has no problem explaining why I should act morally so that others would act morally towards me
 - c) Explains that acting unethically harms me and my family
 - d) Upholds other people's viewpoints

18. All of the following are strengths of utilitarianism except
- outlines methods for decision-making
 - unbiased
 - preserves individuality
 - focuses on society
19. What is the over-riding principle governing ethical research behaviour
- to protect research participants and their communities from harm
 - to obtain informed consent of participants
 - to preserve the anonymity of your participants
 - to avoid dealing with sensitive topics
20. Which of the following is the most important aim of a good “informed consent” form?
- To obtain someone’s consent to participate in your research project
 - To inform participants how much time they will need to put aside to help with your research
 - To obtain informed consent of the participant
 - To inform participants exactly what you will be doing in your research
21. Ethical nursing care will not include
- Ensuring privacy
 - Respecting sanctity and quality of life
 - Respecting truthfulness
 - Unfairness in the use of resources
22. The condition of limited access to a person is
- Confidentiality
 - Secrecy
 - Security
 - Privacy
23. The following is not among general principles regarding confidentiality of patient information
- Patient identifiable information items should not be included unless it is essential for specified purposes of care
 - In case of patients who lack capacity, each use of patient-identifying information should be discussed with a parent or guardian
 - Only those who need access to patient-identifiable information should have access
 - Each use of patient-identifiable information should be lawful

24. Security arrangements for patient records include all the following except
- Arrangements for access to patient information arise as a result of plans to introduce electronic patient records
 - Privacy enhancing techniques are specifically relevant for electronically held information
 - Electronic databases of patient information held centrally pose particular concerns for security
 - Security principles apply equally to paper-based and electronically held information
25. Regarding ethical and legal basis of security and confidentiality, the only correct statement is
- Conventions on human rights are not legally applicable to medical information
 - Conventions on human rights and biomedicine state an absolute right to the respect of privacy
 - The Geneva declaration states an absolute obligation on health care providers to maintain confidentiality
 - Confidentiality is not grounded in the principle of respect for autonomy

TOTAL = 25

Question 2

- a) A nurse running her privately owned clinic has a couple as patients, each of whom consults him regularly with symptoms suggestive of the onset of AIDS. The wife agrees to have a blood test which proves to be HIV positive. She begs the nurse not to inform her husband, fearing this will mean the end of their relationship. The husband adamantly refuses to have a test, saying that he does not want to know if he ever does get AIDS and in any case he “knows how to be careful”. The nurse is also aware that the husband has a number of casual sexual relationships.

Should the nurse inform him that his wife is HIV positive to warn him of the dangers to himself and his other contacts or must the nurse respect the confidentiality of the information, and hope that “careful” means no possibility of transmission of the virus?

(15)

- B) Nozizwe is a 25-year-old woman with mental retardation with a mental age of a five-year-old. She has irregular heavy periods and becomes ill when given injectable contraceptives. She enjoys playing with dolls and babies and is sexually aware to the extent that she has been observed petting with a young male patient she knows and has made overtly sexual approaches to other men. Her parents find her periods hard to cope with and do not see hormonal treatment as an answer to her needs. They have asked that she be sterilized by tubal ligation.

What ethical issues are at play in this scenario and how should health care providers approach such situations?

(10)

TOTAL = 25

Question 3

Gabengani presents herself to her surgeon with laboratory tests that are almost conclusive of a malignant tumour of the bowel. The surgeon talks to her about her symptoms and the tests that have been done, and tells her that there is a cyst or growth of some kind. The possibility of a tumour is alluded to in the context of a general discussion of the need for an operation and possible follow up care. Gabengani has her operation, which relieves her symptoms, but fails to remove the whole tumour, which is found to have metastasized to her liver. She is told that the operation has gone well, and that the growth was some kind of tumour but could not be completely removed. She asks and is told that that this will need further treatment. The fact that it is cancer and that she may not benefit from radiotherapy or chemotherapy is then discussed a few days later.

Critique, using ethical principles, the manner in which Gabengani's surgeon handled the situation. (25)

TOTAL: 25