



A systematic review of ethical and legal issues in elder care

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Abstract

Background: Ethical and legal issues are increasingly being reported by health caregivers; however, little is known about the nature of these issues in geriatric care. These issues can improve work and care conditions in healthcare, and consequently, the health and welfare of older people.

Aim: This literature review aims to identify research focusing on ethical and legal issues in geriatric care, in order to give nurses and other health care workers an overview of existing grievances and possible solutions to take care of old patients in a both ethical and legally correct way.

Methods: Using a systematic approach based on Aveyard, a search of the PubMed, CINAHL, and Ethicshare databases was conducted to find out the articles published on ethical and legal issues in geriatric care.

Ethical considerations: The approval for the study was obtained from UMIT-The Health and Life Sciences University, Austria.

Results: Only 50 articles were included for systematic analysis reporting ethical and legal issues in the geriatric care. The results presented in this article showed that the main ethical issues were related to the older people's autonomy, respect for their needs, wishes and values, and respect for their decision-making. The main legal issues were related to patients' rights, advance directives, elderly rights, treatment nutrition dilemma, and autonomy.

Conclusion: Further education for professional caregivers, elderly people, and their families is needed on following topics: care planning, directive and living wills, and caregiver-family member relationships to guide and support the elderly people within their decision-making processes and during the end-of-life care.

Keywords

Autonomy, beneficence, ethical issues, geriatric care, legal issues, nonmaleficence

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