

▪ *Basic Research*

Multi Factors Related to Pediatric Nurses' Performance Regarding Legal and Ethical Issues of Children Care

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Abstract

Background: Pediatric nurses are facing issues related to legal and ethical issues daily and make them at risk of losing their license so, they require to enhance and upgrade their knowledge regarding ethical and legal issues and integrate their knowledge when making decisions in the daily practice. **Aim:** This study aimed to explore multi factors related to pediatric nurses' performance regarding legal and ethical Issues in children care. **Methods:** A descriptive correlational design was applied and the study was performed at different units in one Pediatric Hospital in Egypt. 200 staff nurses from the aforementioned setting were chosen as a convenient sample. Three instruments were utilized to obtain the data; a legal and ethical knowledge questionnaire, a self-administered practice questionnaire, and a self-administered attitude questionnaire. Continuous data have been analyzed using means and standard deviations, while categorical variables were analyzed by chi-square test. **Results:** (69%) of the pediatric nurses had poor knowledge, (61%) of them had inadequate practice level, and (60%) of them had negative attitudes regarding legal and ethical issues of children care. **Conclusion:** the study proved a significant relation between multi factors and pediatric nurses knowledge, practice and attitude, inclusive age, sex, qualification and experience $P = 0.001$, marital status $P = 0.894$, 0.849 , 1.000 respectively and get training $P = 0.001$. **Recommendation** nurse manager should encourage their staff nurses to participate in training programs especially about ethical and legal issues of patient care and to continue their postgraduate education, and to change any conflicting policies that causes legal and ethical problem to their staff.

Keywords: Children, Legal and Ethical Issues, Pediatric nurses, Performance

Introduction:

Today's healthcare delivery system has developed into a thriving sector. Consumers of health care services nowadays are more knowledgeable about health and illness than they were in the past. The importance of fundamental ethical and legal principles is emphasized in all daily decisions made by pediatricians. Healthcare providers face obstacles as the demands of children rise, and they should adjust to this by implementing ethical and legal principles in child care (**Saver, 2021; Varkey, 2021**).

Given that nurses deal with human life and death on a daily basis in the healthcare sector and they are the largest group of medical team that directly care for patients, nurses are particularly vulnerable to ethical and legal concerns. In light of the fact that they deal with human life events including birth, death, illness, and well-being, their working environment is governed by legal and ethical principles. This growth has brought to the forefront new concerns among nurses, particularly pediatric nurses, who are now more aware of nursing legal and ethical challenges (**Thapa et al., 2021; Toumová et al., 2021**).

The ethics philosophy is the area of science that addresses whether a particular action is morally right or wrong. Activities in the nursing profession are covered by a subfield of applied ethics called nursing ethics. It alludes to the moral standards that regulate and direct nurses in their day-to-day work, such as being truthful with patients, respecting all patients, maintaining patient confidentiality, and standing up for patients. Any field that deals with people needs to take ethics into account since they respect relationships, rights, and values. Nurses have a responsibility to offer ethics and legitimate patient care that respects others (**American Nurses Association, 2021; Haddad & Geiger, 2022**).

Pediatric nurses are required to follow an ethical set of guidelines that direct their professional actions and choices. Each and every healthcare profession operates under these guiding principles. All members of a profession often accept ethical concepts, such as autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, fairness, and faithfulness (**Aderemi, 2016; Manfred, 2020**). Ethics and laws are important and they are the practical guide on the legal and ethical issues of child healthcare that enable nurses to comprehend the guiding principles that regulate daily nursing practice. They look at the concept of childhood and children's rights, the degree to which those rights are enforced in various contexts, and the interaction between law and ethics in addressing issues and moral dilemmas that frequently come up in nursing practice (**Asare et al., 2022; Manoharam., 2022**).

In addition, they place the children's care and treatment in a legal and ethical context and explore the way in which legal and ethical concerns of pediatric nursing differ from those applied to adults (**Bayoumi et al., 2017; Beykmirza et al., 2022**). Legal issues include what a nurse must follow in a professional manner, or the tasks that nurses are legally allowed to perform with regard to patient care. Nurses who are knowledgeable of their legal obligations and rights are better prepared to protect themselves against claims or liability and loss of professional licensing, which also protect their patients. The umbrella under which nurses fulfill many roles, and meet all types of needs especially biological and sensitive ones is a legal responsibility. So that the legal and ethical scope of care is essential for all team members working in a nursing setting as it emphasizes the rights of all patients and the quality of care they receive (**Mostafa & Taie , 2019; Sabra & Hossny, 2020**).

Understanding the legal constraints that nurses must adhere to is a necessary component of

safe nursing practice. Additionally, today's nurses must be critical thinkers and understand the implications of the law in all dimensions of their work (**Aboelmagd, 2022; Rimal, 2020**). Pediatric nurses must be aware of the law in order to avoid liability and uphold the rights of children. Nurses shouldn't be afraid of the law; instead, they should view the information that follows as the starting point for knowing what their society expects of professionals who offer nursing care. From this concern nurse's familiarity with the laws can improve their ability to advocate for patients (**El-Sayed & Bayoumi, 2020**).

When a nurse's practice deviates from the accepted levels of standard of care, this puts the nurse at risk of legal action. Both professional license review and litigation can result in reprimand of a nurse's license or loss of a license. Nurses face legal issues daily. Those aspects may be related to negligence, drug administration, and advocating for the patient. If these obligations and laws are not noticed, the nurses are at big risk of losing licenses and facing malpractice claims (**Aderemi, 2016; Brierley et al., 2022**). To avoid ethical and legal issues, nurses should follow the optimum standards of care, in order to offer skilled care, interconnect with other healthcare providers and enhance a good therapeutic caring relationship. As well as, documentation must reflect contemporary nursing practice and be accurate, comprehensive, factual, and legible (**Ashalata Devi, 2017**).

Nurses carry out tasks in accordance with doctors' orders and, when necessary, utilize their own judgment (**Koshy, 2016**). Ethics in pediatric nursing entails treating all patients fairly and equally, regardless of their age, sex, caste, faith, religion, culture, ethnicity, citizenship, disability, socioeconomic status, political affiliation, or other characteristics (**Ashalata Devi, 2017; Bayoumi et al., 2017**). Hospitalized children frequently cannot express their needs; the illness of the child can have an effect on both families and the children so, it is important to respect legal and ethical issues in children care. Children in hospitals frequently struggle to communicate their demands and children's illness can have a traumatic consequence for the child. For these reasons, it's critical to respect moral and legal issues when caring for children. Acknowledging children's rights at the hospital accelerates the diagnostic and recovery process and lessens children's anxiety in the hospital environment(**Aboelmagd, 2022**).

According to the Convention of Child Rights, it describes children's right to health as "an inclusive right, extending not only to adequate prevention, health promotion, therapeutic, rehabilitative and palliative care but also to a right to grow and develop to their full potential and live in circumstances that enable them to achieve the highest quality of health through the application of programs that address the underlying determinants of health"(**Whalen, 2022**). In any situation where children live, children's rights must be honored. The time that children spend in the hospital can be seen as a chance to advance their rights, and boost their development (**World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, 2017**).

In pediatric wards, ethical dilemmas occur with a greater intensity than in adults. Pediatric wards include more vulnerable groups. So, working in such wards is considered a distinctive activity and necessitates special skills and professional knowledge. There are factors that make it not easy for pediatric nurses to learn ethical practice including the care take place in a variable situation that influenced by rapid technological advances, newly models of providing care and the exposure to different cultures (**Karami et al., 2017**).

Significance of the study

As health care delivery system has become more variable and flexible, the nurses' roles have increased quickly. Because nurses are regularly faced with situations requiring them to make tough decisions based on the assessment of right and wrong from both a legal and ethical aspect. This progress has brought to the spotlight new concerns among nurses, particularly pediatric nurses who now have a greater awareness of ethical and legal dilemmas (**Damsma Bakker et al., 2021; Kouhnevard et al., 2022**). Furthermore, the pediatric nurse performs a crucial function from admission time to discharge in which orientation, fulfilling various types of requirements, notably physiological and psychological demands, clarifying rights of child and parents, keeping privacy, taking informed permission, and following so many duties all of which come within the legal and ethical obligations of nurses. In order to practice pediatric health nursing, nurses must be familiar with the fundamental legal concerns associated with caring for pediatric patients as well as the laws governing the care and treatment of children (**Aboelmagd, 2022; American Nurses Association, 2021**).

Physicians are seldom behaving in an accountable and responsible approach toward pediatric patients. The pediatric nurse is most suited to fill the gap between the physician's behavior and the child's needs because of the nursing role and relationship with the child. Additionally, they are responsible for providing children with care that complies with accepted moral and legal rules. They will encounter legal problems every day if they don't have a thorough understanding of the law and ethics pertaining to the nursing profession (**Brogen et al., 2009; Mishal et al., 2018**). The reason for conducting this study is that the researchers observed there are deficient studies performed in Egypt about factors related to pediatric nurses' performance regarding legal and ethical issues in children's care. Thus, this research was designed to offer a distinctive identification of multi factors related to pediatric nurses' performance regarding ethical and legal issues of children's care. The aim of the current research was to explore multi factors related to pediatric nurses' performance regarding legal and ethical issues in children care.

Aim of the study

The aim of the present study was to explore multi factors related to pediatric nurses' performance regarding legal and ethical Issues in children care.

Research Questions

Q1: What is the level of pediatric nurses' knowledge regarding legal and ethical issues in children care?

Q2: What is the level of pediatric nurses' practice regarding legal and ethical Issues in children care?

Q3: What is the pediatric nurse' attitude regarding legal and ethical issues in children care?

Q4: What are the factors related to pediatric nurses' performance regarding legal and ethical issues in children care?

Subjects and Methods

Research Design: A descriptive correlational design was applied, to answer the research questions

Setting

The research was implemented in El-Fayoum University Pediatric Hospital; which is an educational, governmental hospital with 119 beds, a hospital allied to the Ministry of higher education, Egypt. The hospital delivers free comprehensive health care for children from urban and rural areas with a variety of socioeconomic classes. It involves seven floors, the first floor being occupied for the out patients clinics and emergency department; the second floor for children intensive and intermediate care units; the third floor for the hemodialysis department and neonatal intensive care unit; the fourth floor for rehabilitation unit; the fifth floor for operations, internal surgical, and the six and seven floors for internal medical departments. This hospital was chosen because it is the only one in this city that specializes in child care.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were carefully chosen via a convenience sample. Around 253 questionnaires were distributed in total and 200 of them were filled out, 60 male and 140 females' staff nurses, yielding a response rate of 80%. The eligibility criteria for this study were staff nurses who had at least six months of experience in a pediatric setting and accept to engage in this study.

Data Collection Tools:

The following instruments were applied to obtain data for the current study.

Tool 1: Legal and Ethical Knowledge Questionnaire: It includes three parts

Part1: Personal characteristics form

Created by authors after reviewing the pertinent literature, it contained 6 questions that covered the socio- demographic details of the study respondents as (age, sex, qualifications, marital status, years of experience in a pediatric setting and attached any training about the legal and ethical topic.

Part 2: Legal questionnaire

Established by the researchers after reviewing the relevant sources (**Jyoti & Sharma, 2020; Saver, 2021**). It evaluated the knowledge of pediatric nurses about legal issues in children's care. It was composed of eight multiple choices statements and fourteen true and false statements.

Part3: Ethical Questionnaire

Created by the researchers following an assessment of the previous researches (**Aliyu, 2015; El-Azzab & Mohamed, 2021**). It examined pediatric nurses' knowledge regarding ethical issues in children care. It comprised eight multiple - choice statements. The answers received a rating of "1" for correct responses and "0" for incorrect ones; the overall score is computed by adding the item scores resulting in scores falling between 0 to 30 points. The cut-off value for each instrument was computed using the mean score. The overall knowledge score was classified as follows; Poor knowledge $\leq 50\%$, Average knowledge $51 \leq 75\%$, and Good knowledge $\geq 75\%$.

Tool 2: Self-Administered Practice Questionnaire

Designed through the researchers depends on the literature (**Jyoti & Sharma, 2020; Saver, 2021**) . It measured the pediatric nurses' practice regarding ethical and legal issues in children's care. It consisted of 18 multiple - choice statements. The following formula was used to estimate the nurses' practice for every element: The right reply received a score of "1," whilst the wrong response received a score of "0." The total scores varied from 0 to 18 points. Total practice score was calculated as follows; inadequate $\leq 50\%$, moderately adequate $51 \leq 75\%$ and adequate $\geq 75\%$.

Tool 3: Self-Administered Attitude Questionnaire

Designed by the researchers based on (**Rimal, 2020; Yildirim Sarı et al., 2020**) to determine the nurses attitude about ethical and legal issues of children care. It consisted of lists of nine statements. According to a Likert scale of three points, nurses' replies were graded as shown: (1) Disagree, (2) Neutral, (3) Agree. The total scores were labeled as follows: negative attitude (0-50%) and positive attitude (51- 100%).

Tool Validity

Face validity of the study tools was tested by five experts in nursing administration and pediatric nursing for clarity, applicability, and adequacy of the tools. These included two professors from Ain Shams University, two professors from Benha University, and one assistant professor from Cairo University. Minor modifications were done based on their opinions.

Tool Reliability

The reliability was done by Cronbach alpha coefficient test which revealed that each item of the utilized tools consisted relatively homogenous items. The internal consistency of self-administered knowledge questionnaire was 0.81, the nurses' practices questionnaire regarding the legal and ethical Issues was 0.87, and the nurses' attitude questionnaire regarding the legal and ethical Issues was 0.89.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to assess the clarity and understanding of the study tool before introducing it to the nurses to evaluate the usability of the study in terms of appropriateness to the participants. It also was used to estimate the approximate time required for interviewing the participants as well as to find out any problem or obstacle that might interfere with data collection. The pilot study was conducted for 20 nurses (10%) and according to its results, no modifications were made, and therefore they were included in the main study sample.

Field work:

Upon receiving an official permission for conducting this study was obtained from director of El- fayoum pediatric university hospital as well as nursing director. The researchers met with study sample on their work place who were available and accepted to participate in study. Then an explanation to study purpose and nature was done to facilitate data collection. This was done in both morning and afternoon shift after referring to nurses' scheduling. The questionnaire sheets took around 30 minutes from each participant to answer. It was returned on the same day. Data was obtained from nurses in different

departments; the data collection process took place over a three-month period from the beginning of October 2022 until the middle of February 2023.

Administrative design:

An official letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted from the Dean of Faculty of Nursing, Beni-Suef University to the Director of El- Fayoum pediatric University Hospital . It included the aim of the study and a photocopy of data collection tools in order to get the permission and cooperation for study implementation and data collection. The director provided the permission and directed the nursing hospital director to facilitate the researchers' mission.

Ethical considerations:

The study protocol was accepted by the research ethics committees in the Faculty of Medicine - Beni-Suef University (FM-BSU REC/02102022). An informed consent was obtained from each participant after being informed about the aim and procedures of the study and nurses were reminded of their rights to reject or withdraw at any point and the confidentiality of any information gathered. Also, the study did not have any negative effects on the subjects.

Statistical Analysis:

Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used to analyze the gathered data. Number and percentage were used to present categorical variables and to evaluate for a significant difference, Chi square was applied. For continuous variables, means and standard deviations were employed. The correlation between the study variables was evaluated using the Pearson correlation coefficient. At the 5% level, the significance of the results was determined.

Results

Table (1): Exhibits that, more than a third of the studied sample (40%) had aged from 25 to less than 35 years old with Mean \pm SD. (31.10 \pm 8.58). Regarding sex more than two third (70%) of them were female. As for education slightly less than half (48.5%) of them had technical institute. Besides that, more than two third (70%) of them were married. Pertaining experience it was noticed that, more than one quarter (30%) of them had less than five years of experience. Moreover, concerning training the majority (86%) of them didn't attach any training about ethical and legal issues of nursing.

Table (2): proves that two- thirds (66%) of the studied sample had poor levels of knowledge regarding legal issues of children's care. While slightly more than two third (68%) had a poor level of knowledge regarding ethical issues in children's care. Regarding the total level of knowledge: more than two third (69%) had a poor level of overall knowledge; meanwhile slightly less than a third (31.0%) had an average level of overall knowledge about legal and ethical issues of children's care.

Figure (1): Illustrates that less than two - third (61%) of the studied sample had an inadequate level of practice, whereas (39%) of them had a moderate level of practice regarding legal and ethical issues of children's care.

Figure (2): Illustrates that less than two - third (60%) of the studied sample had a negative attitude; meanwhile more than a third (40%) had positive attitude regarding legal and ethical issues of children care.

Table (3): Displays that, more than half (58.5%) of the studied nurses were agreed with the statement “Believe that as part of a syllabus, ethics should be taught in every medical/nursing teaching institution.”, But half (50%) of them were disagreed with the statement “Feel guilty when the child loses any right of health care” or “Feel that every nurse should be responsible/ accountable for any activities which performed by her regarding nursing care of the child in their duty hour”.

Table (4): Reveals that there were statistically significant positive correlations between practice and knowledge, practice and attitude, and knowledge and attitude of the studied sample of pediatric nurses regarding legal and ethical issues of children care.

Table (5): shows that there were significant positive associations between personal characteristics (age, sex, education, marital status, years of experience, and attached training) and the level of knowledge of the studied sample about legal and ethical issues of children care ($p < 0.001$). Also, reveals that there were significant positive associations between personal characteristics (age, sex, education, years of experience, and attached training) and the level of practice of the studied sample about legal and ethical issues of children care ($p < 0.001$). Likewise, there were significant positive associations between personal characteristics (age, sex, education, years of experience and attached training) and the attitude of the studied sample about legal and ethical issues of children care ($p < 0.001$).

Table (7): Shows that, there were significant positive associations between personal characteristics (age, sex, Education, years of experience and attendance of training) and the attitude of the studied sample regarding legal and ethical issues of children care ($p < 0.001$).

Table (1): Distribution of the studied sample according to personal characteristics (n = 200)

Personal characteristics	No.	%
Age		
20 <25	60	30.0
25 < 35	80	40.0
35 < 45	20	10.0
≥ 45	40	20.0
Min. – Max	22 – 46	
Mean ± SD.	31.10 ± 8.58	
Sex		
Male	60	30.0
Female	140	70.0
Education		
Technical institute	97	48.5
Bachelor degree	39	19.5
MSc- PhD- Diploma	64	32.0
Marital status		
Single	60	30.0
Married	140	70.0
Experience		
< 1 year	100	50.0
1<3 years	60	30.0
≥ 3 years	40	20.0
Training		
Yes	28	14.0
No	172	86.0

SD: Standard deviation

Table (2): Total knowledge levels about legal and ethical Issues of children care among studied nurses (n = 200)

Self-administered knowledge questionnaire	Poor $\leq 50\%$		Average 51-75%		Good $\geq 75\%$		Total score	% score
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	Mean \pm SD.	Mean \pm SD.
knowledge about legal issues	132	66.0	68	34.0	0	0.0	12.78 \pm 7.35	58.09 \pm 33.42
knowledge about Ethical issues	136	68.0	64	32.0	0	0.0	3.67 \pm 3.14	45.88 \pm 39.31
Overall	138	69.0	62	31.0	0	0.0	16.45 \pm 9.51	54.83 \pm 31.69

Figure (1): Total practice levels of the studied sample regarding to legal and ethical issues of children care (n = 200)

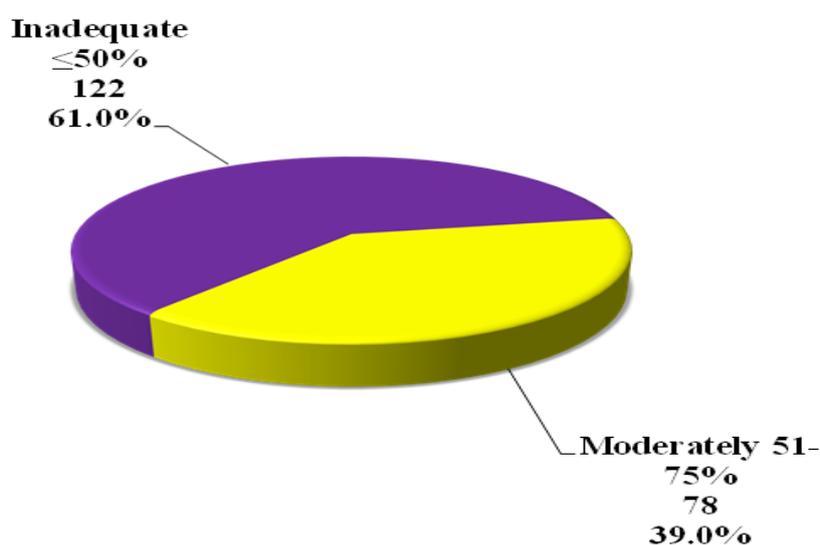


Figure (2): Total attitude levels of the studied sample regarding to legal and ethical issues of children care (n = 200).

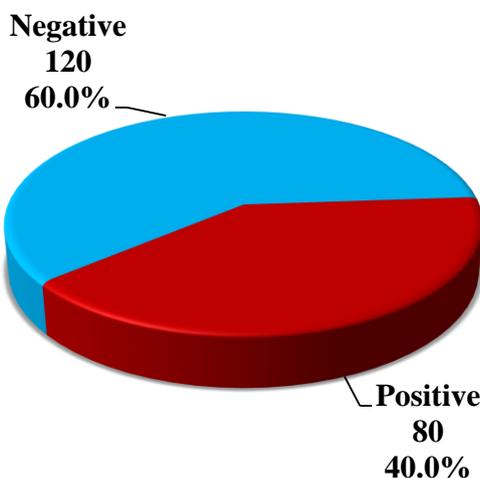


Table (3): Percentage distribution of the studied sample attitude regarding legal and ethical Issues of children care (n = 200).

Attitude	N0=200 (100%)					
	Agree		Neutral		Disagree	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
1-Feel guilt when malpractice occurs in child care	115	57.5	9	4.5	76	38
2-Feel guilty for neglecting the legal Issues of child care	80	40	40	20	80	40
3-Feel guilty when I notice anyone of health team neglecting in care of the children	100	50	60	30	40	20
4-Feel ashamed when any child suffers self-harm.	80	40	80	40	40	20
5-Feel guilty when the child loses any right of health care	40	20	60	30	100	50
6-Believe that nurse who is punished by a court for a criminal offense in her personal matter is disqualified for a nursing license	78	39	80	40	42	21
7-Feel that making decision as " Do not resuscitate" includes the child and family	80	40	40	20	80	40
8-Believe that written consent is obtained only for major procedures including surgical operations, not for nursing procedures.	60	30	100	50	40	20
9-Believe that spelling errors of drugs in writing nursing reports refer to mistake in the documentation.	60	30	80	40	60	30
10- Believe that the Handover/Takeover book must be maintained with the signature of nurses who takes/ gives handover/ takeover.	76	38	81	40.5	43	21.5
11-Believe that as part of a syllabus, Ethics should be taught in ever medical/nursing teaching institution.	117	58.5	7	3.5	76	38
12- Feel that code of ethics is considered broader and more universal than laws but cannot override laws.	60	30	80	40	60	30
13-Feel that nurses should keep any information disclosed to the authentic person known to her about the patient's condition.	80	40	80	40	40	20
14-Feel that every nurse should be responsible/ accountable for any activities which performed by her regarding nursing care of the child in their duty hour.	40	20	60	40	100	50

Table (4): Correlations between knowledge, practice and attitude of studied nurses regarding legal and ethical Issues of children care (n = 200).

	r	p
Practice VS. knowledge	0.396*	<0.001*
Practice VS. attitude	0.487*	<0.001*
Knowledge VS. attitude	0.678*	<0.001*

r: Pearson coefficient

*: Statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$

Table (5): Associations between multi factors of pediatric nurses and their level of knowledge, practice and attitude regarding legal and ethical issues of children care (n=200)

Personal characteristics	Level of Knowledge				χ^2	p	Level of practice				χ^2	P	Level of attitude				χ^2	P
	Poor (n = 138)		Average (n = 62)				Inadequate (n = 122)		Moderate (n = 78)				Negative (n =120)		Positive (n =80)			
Age																		
20 <25	60	43.5	0	0.0	190.88 4*	<0.001*	56	45.9	4	5.1	88.679*	<0.001*	60	50.0	0	0.0	137.500*	<0.001*
25 < 35	78	56.5	2	3.2			58	47.5	22	28.2			60	50.0	20	25.0		
35 < 45	0	0.0	20	32.3			4	3.3	16	20.5			0	0.0	20	25.0		
≥ 45	0	0.0	40	64.5			4	3.3	36	46.2			0	0.0	40	50.0		
Sex																		
Male	58	42.0	2	3.2	30.673 *	<0.001*	56	45.9	4	5.1	37.667*	<0.001*	60	50.0	0	0.0	57.143*	<0.001*
Female	80	58.0	60	96.8			66	54.1	74	94.9			60	50.0	80	100.0		
Qualification																		
Technical institute	95	68.8	2	3.2	100.23 1*	<0.001*	94	77.0	3	3.8	128.741 *	<0.001*	95	79.2	2	2.5	132.034*	<0.001*
Bachelor degree	28	20.3	11	17.7			23	18.9	16	20.5			20	16.7	19	23.8		
MSc- PhD- Diploma	15	10.9	49	79.0			5	4.1	59	75.6			5	4.2	59	73.8		
Marital status																		
Single	41	29.7	19	30.6	0.018	0.894	36	29.5	24	30.8	0.036	0.849	36	30.0	24	30.0	0.000	1.000
Married	97	70.3	43	69.4			86	70.5	54	69.2			84	70.0	56	70.0		
Experience																		
1 < 3 Months	60	43.5	0	0.0	134.86 1*	<0.001*	56	45.9	4	5.1	100.659 *	<0.001*	60	50.0	0	0.0	144.444*	<0.001*
3 <5 year	40	29.0	0	0.0			38	31.1	2	2.6			40	33.3	0	0.0		
5 <10 years	38	27.5	22	35.5			24	19.7	36	46.2			20	16.7	40	50.0		
≥ 10 years	0	0.0	40	64.5			4	3.3	36	46.2			0	0.0	40	50.0		
Training																		
Yes	9	6.5	19	30.6	20.677 *	<0.001*	10	8.2	18	23.1	8.750*	0.003*	10	8.3	18	22.5	8.001*	0.005*
No	129	93.5	43	69.4			112	91.8	60	76.9			110	91.7	62	77.5		

Discussion:

Infants and young children are considered one of the vulnerable groups and caring for them leads to every challenge among pediatric nurses. Nurses may face situations such as child abuse or neglecting, dying of children, and non-compliance with treatment by patients and their families. Practicing ethically begins with being sensitive to human life quality. Facing this challenge necessitates that nurses working in pediatric units become knowledgeable with ethical and legal rights of children and their families (**Elarousy, 2017; Majeed et al., 2020**).

The current study finding revealed that regarding age, two-fifths of them were in the 25 to under-35 age range with a mean age (**31.10±8.58**). Regarding sex, over two - thirds of the nurses in the sample were female. Concerning education, nearly half of them had technical education; regarding marital status, almost two - thirds of them were married. Regarding experience, one -quarter of them had less than five years of experience and the majority of nurses didn't attend training courses about legal and ethical issues.

These results were in disagreement with (**Koshy, 2016; Mishal et al., 2018**) found that regarding age most of the participants were between the ages of 21 and 30 years. Regarding qualifications, more than half of them had a bachelor's degree in nursing. Regarding years of experience, nearly half of them had more than 5 years. But there was an agreement with the results regarding sex which indicated that the majority of participants were female and didn't attend any educational or training program.

Also, these results were incongruent with (**Begum, 2018; Elsayed , 2013**) found that regarding sex, all of participants were female. Regarding age, one - third of them were in the age group ranging from 31-35 years. Regarding education, the majority of them had bachelor's degrees. Regarding experience in a pediatric unit, more than one - third had experience of one a year. But there was an agreement that the majority of them didn't attend training programs about legal and ethical issues.

Regarding pediatric nurses' total level of knowledge about legal and ethical issues of children care, the results revealed that more than two- thirds of participants had a poor level of knowledge mean while slightly less than a third of them had an average level of knowledge about the legal and ethical issues of children care. This may be due to their old age and their graduation was a while ago which causes their information to be not fresh; also, the half of studied nurses had a technical education and they didn't study this course during their education. In addition, the majority of the study sample didn't attend any training about legal and ethical issues of children care.

This result was supported by (**Darsini & Sowmiya., 2021; Al-Bardah, Shenouda , 2012**) found that the highest percent of the studied sample had inadequate knowledge about legal and ethical issues of children care in the pretest. But, this result disagreed with (**Begum, 2018; Majeed et al., 2020**) found that more than the half of participants had moderate knowledge; meanwhile, slightly less than half had inadequate knowledge about legal and ethical issues regarding children's care. Also, with (**Koshy, 2016**) revealed that the majority of nurses had average and good knowledge regarding legal and ethical issues of nursing care of children.

Similarly, this result was inconsistent with (**Kouhnevard et al., 2022**) noted that pediatric nurses had a moderate level of knowledge regarding child abuse and neglect.

Regarding pediatric nurses' total practice level about ethical and legal issues, the present study results revealed that less than two - thirds of the participants had an inadequate level of practice regarding ethical and legal issues related to children's care. This might be the consequence of a lack of experience and training regarding legal and ethical issues in children care. Similar to that, this finding was matched with (**Begum, 2018; Guerreiro, 2014**) showed that more than half of the participants had poor practice about legal and ethical issues of children care. Also, there was an agreement with (**Darsini & Sowmiya., 2021; Brogen et al., 2009**) revealed that the majority of the pediatric nurses had inadequate practice regarding legal and ethical issues in the pretest. On contrast, this finding disagreed with (**Shadi et al., 2021**) revealing that the largest percent indicated that the ethical practice of pediatric nurses was moderate. In addition; this finding was similarly incongruent with (**Kouhnevard et al., 2022**) indicated in their research that the overall practice level of pediatric nurses regarding any cases of child abuse or neglect was moderate.

Regarding nurses' total attitude level about ethical and legal issues of children care, less than two- thirds of the nurses in the study displayed a negative attitude and more than a third had a positive attitude about legal and ethical issues about children care. This may be due to the presence of conflicting policies inside their organization which create legal and ethical problems for them especially for children's care. Also they had poor knowledge level about ethical and legal issues related to children care.

Similarly, this finding was in disagreement with (**Kouhnevard et al., 2022; Yıldız & Tok Yıldız, 2019**) who revealed in their study that the pediatric nurses had a good level of attitude regarding child abuse and neglect. Also, this result was inconsistent with (**Kara et al., 2014**) shown in their study that the attitude of pediatric nurses was positive.

Concerning pediatric nurses' attitudes regarding legal and ethical issues of children, the results displayed that more than half of them agreed that "Ethics should be taught as a part of the syllabus in every medical\nursing teaching institution", This may be due to that all medical and nursing staff deal with humans, where necessitate dealing with ethics. Likewise, this finding was corroborated by (**Adhikari et al., 2016**) who confirmed in their research that, the majority of doctors and nurses supported that every medical and nursing educational institution should include ethical courses in its undergraduate programs.

Also, similarly, this result was in agreement with (**Majeed et al., 2020**) found that the majority of the undergraduates said that it is necessary for teaching medical ethics to undergraduates. In addition, half of the studied pediatric nurses disagreed with the statement "Feel guilty when the child loses any right of health care" or "Feel that every nurse should be responsible/ accountable for any activities which performed by her regarding nursing care of the child in their duty hour". This may be due to the belief that accountability should be shared between them and medical staff. Additionally, El-Fayoum governorate is considered as a rural region in which they may have a low awareness level about ethical and legal issues in child care.

Concerning the correlations between total nurses' knowledge, practice, and attitude about ethical and legal issues in the care of children, the results displayed a very statistically significant positive correlation involving practice and knowledge, practice and attitude, and knowledge and attitude of the studied sample of pediatric nurses regarding legal and ethical issues of children care. This may be due to the more information and the more positive attitude a person has towards a particular topic, the better his performance and vice versa. On

the same line, these results were matched with **(Wisniewska et al., 2020)** revealed that there was statistical dependence between the seniority of nurses and their view about the worth of knowledge about ethical issues in solving moral problems.

Also, similarly, there was an agreement with the results of **(Abd-Elrhaman, 2019)** found a significant correlation between the nurses' total practice and knowledge levels about proficient nursing ethics immediately following the program. But, these results were congruent with **(Kouhnevard et al., 2022)** showing that there wasn't a significant difference between the mean score of pediatric nurses' knowledge and their attitude about child abuse and neglect.

Concerning associations of pediatric nurses' multi factors and their total knowledge about ethical and legal issues in the care of children, there were significant associations between age, sex, level of education, attendance training and years of experience of studied nurses and their knowledge about ethical and legal issues in the care of children. This may be due to the higher the experience, the higher the knowledge. Additionally, when nurses grow, they felt the importance of applying legal and ethical knowledge to enhance their performance.

These results matched with the results conducted by **(Aboelmagd, 2022)**, who showed in their research that pediatric nurses aged between 30- < 35 years and 40- 45 years and those who had postgraduate education had a good awareness about child advocacy and rights.

Regarding the association between pediatric nurses' multi factors and their total practice level about ethical and legal issues in care of children, there were significant positive associations between personal characteristics (age, sex, Education, years of experience, and attendance of training) and the level of practice. This might be owing to the majority of the participant being female; also the presence of factors such as experience and higher education can positively affect the nurses' practice. Similarly, this result was supported by **(Abd-Elrhaman, 2019)** who showed that strong significant relationships between participant ethics practice, their educational level and experience. Besides, **(Begum, 2018)** showed that there was an association between the pediatric nurses' practice and their demographic variables, as the nurses who had more years of experience had high practice levels than others. in contrast, these results disagreed with **(Shadi et al., 2021)** proved no significant relationships between the demographic characteristics of nurses and their ethical performance.

Finally, regarding the associations between pediatric nurses' multi factors and their attitude about ethical and legal issues in the care of children, there were significant positive associations between the personal characteristics (age, sex, Education, years of experience and attendance of training) of the studied nurses and their attitude. This may be due to that the majority of the studied sample was female. Also, postgraduate education and years of experience of individuals can affect their values and beliefs about specific issues. These results disagreed with **(Yıldız & Tok Yıldız, 2019)** revealed that the characteristics of pediatric nurses (gender and years of experience) didn't significantly affect the attitude of nurses toward children rights, but it was in agreement that educational level can affect nurses' attitudes.

Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing results of this study, it can be concluded that, more than two third of the studied pediatric nurses had poor level of the overall knowledge, less than two third had inadequate level of practice, and less than two third had negative attitude regarding legal and ethical issues of children care. There were statistically significant positive correlations

between practice, knowledge and attitude. Also, there were positive associations between personal characteristics and knowledge, practice and attitude regarding legal and ethical Issues of children care. These findings answer all research questions.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings obtained from the current study, the following recommendations are suggested:

Nurse Managers should:

1. Encourage staff nurses to participate in training programs especially about ethical and legal issues of patient care.
2. Encourage staff nurses to continue their postgraduate education, this help in improving their knowledge, practice and attitude.
3. Change policies conflicting with each other that cause legal and ethical problems for nurses.
4. Provide staff nurses with support when they face any problems related to legal and ethical issues of patient care.
5. Participate in the responsibility and accountability about patient care with their staff nurses.

Future research were suggested

1. Explore causes of legal and ethical problems among staff nurses.
2. Design an educational program for developing pediatric nurses about legal and ethical issues of children care.
3. Explore the relationship between legal and ethical problems and the organizational ethical climate.

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الملخص العربي

العوامل المتعددة المتعلقة بآداء ممرضين الأطفال فيما يتعلق بالنواحي القانونية والأخلاقية لرعاية

الأطفال

مقدمة: يواجه ممرضو الأطفال قضايا تتعلق بالقضايا القانونية والأخلاقية يوميا ويجعلونهم عرضة لخطر فقدان ترخيصهم، لذلك يحتاجون إلى تعزيز وتحديث معرفتهم فيما يتعلق بالقضايا الأخلاقية والقانونية ودمج معرفتهم عند اتخاذ القرارات في الممارسة اليومية.

الهدف: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف العوامل المتعددة المتعلقة بآداء ممرضات الأطفال فيما يتعلق بالنواحي القانونية والأخلاقية في رعاية الأطفال.

التصميم: تم تطبيق التصميم الارتباطي الوصفي وأجريت الدراسة في وحدات مختلفة في أحد مستشفيات الأطفال في مصر. تم اختيار 200 ممرضة من البيئة المذكورة أعلاه كعينة مناسبة.

النتائج: (69%) من ممرضات الأطفال لديهم معرفة ضعيفة، (61%) منهم لديهم مستوى ممارسة غير كافي، و(60%) منهم لديهم اتجاهات سلبية فيما يتعلق بالقضايا القانونية والأخلاقية لرعاية الأطفال.

الخلاصة والتوصيات: أثبتت الدراسة وجود علاقة ذات دلالة إحصائية بين العوامل المتعددة ومعرفة وممارسات واتجاهات ممرضات الأطفال، والعمر الشامل والجنس والمؤهل والخبرة $P = 0.001$ ، والحالة الاجتماعية $P = 0.894$ ، $P = 0.849$ ، $P = 1.000$ على التوالي والحصول على التدريب $P = 0.001$. التوصية يجب على مدير التمريض تشجيع الممرضات العاملین لديه على المشاركة في برامج التدريب خاصة فيما يتعلق بالقضايا الأخلاقية والقانونية لرعاية المرضى ومواصلة تعليمهم بعد التخرج، وتغيير أي سياسات متعارضة تسبب مشكلة قانونية وأخلاقية لموظفيهم.