

# Moral Distress Among Health Care Professionals: Implications from a Cross-Sectional Study

Preston H. Miller, PhD, RN, CCRN-CMC, PCCN, CFRN, Shikha Modi, PhD, MBA, Jennifer Vann, DNP, ACNP-BC, ACHPN

## Introduction

- ❖ Moral distress occurs when they health care professionals are unable to act in alignment with their professional ethics or values to address an ethical issue or conflict due to institutional constraints
- ❖ Contributes to burnout and intent to leave

## Purpose

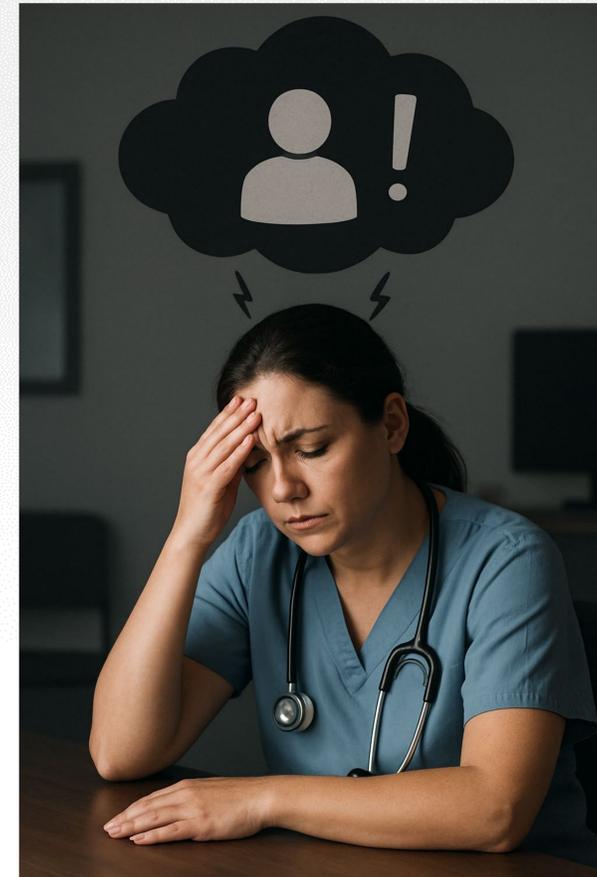
- ❖ Assess the frequency and intensity of moral distress experienced by HPs at a large regional hospital to identify the most prevalent and intense contributing factors

## Methodology

- ❖ **Design:** Cross-Sectional Descriptive
- ❖ **Measures:** Investigator-Developed Demographic Questionnaire, Measure of Moral Distress for Health Care Professionals (MMD-HP)
- ❖ Data collected March-May 2025
- ❖ Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis

## Results

- ❖ N=98 HPs
  - n=45 Nurses
  - n=10 Advance Practice Providers
  - n=9 Physicians
  - n=26 Other HPs
- ❖ Mean MMD-HP Score= 130.58
  - Highest among Unit/Mid-Level Leaders (M=158.75, SD=87.08)
- ❖ 28 HPs recorded currently intending to leave position due to moral distress



## Implications

- ❖ Any HP can experience moral distress
- ❖ Moral distress can contribute to significant turnover costs
- ❖ Health care institutions may consider systemic approaches to addressing and mitigating moral distress
  - Moral Distress Consultation
  - Reflective Debriefing
  - Mindfulness and Resiliency Training
- ❖ Health care institutions should address and mitigate workplace violence

## Conclusion

- ❖ Futile care at the end of life continues to be a major source of moral distress among HPs
- ❖ Findings may inform education programs, policies, protocols, and interventions to address and mitigate moral distress

## References



Image is AI Generated using ChatGPT

MMD-HP Item	Item Score
<i>Follow family's insistence for futile care</i>	(M=8.44,SD=5.68)
<i>Continue to provide futile care when no one makes a decision to deescalate care</i>	(M=7.64,SD=5.78)
<i>Compromised patient care due to lack of resources</i>	(M=7.06,SD=5.97)
<i>Working with abusive patients or family members</i>	(M=6.93,SD=6.21)
<i>Watching patient care suffer due to lack of provider continuity</i>	(M=6.66,SD=5.63)