

Three situations to appreciate practical ethics in care relationship and subsequent well-being of professionals in nursing homes during Covid- 19 crisis

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INTRODUCTION

During the first wave of the crisis, the number of deaths exploded in Belgian nursing homes. Subsequently, rules of social distancing and strict sanitary measures were imposed by the public authorities and implemented in the nursing homes in a context of lack of resources.

METHOD

This communication, based on 15 semi-directive individual interviews conducted between March and December 2020 with various professionals in nursing homes (nurses, nursing auxiliaries, doctors) aims to identify the ways in which the Covid-19 crisis has impacted care relationship and subsequent well-being of professionals.

RESULTS

Unprecedented nature of the conditions has forced professionals to negotiate and make new decisions that have impacted the way they build relationships with their patients and colleagues as well as their professional ethic in this regard. The care of the person as people get closer to dying, the division of labour between teams, the family visits represent three critical situations that have challenged the relational work of the health providers. We will analyse how these three situations are representative of deep interrogation of professional identities in nursing homes and beyond.

DISCUSSION

In most care professions, the relationship with the care seeker is both an object (relationship building is part of care) and a working tool (delivering care requires a good relationship with patients and colleagues) for professionals in nursing homes. A practical ethic is developed, whose principles are acquired through successive socialisations and experiences. The questions and renegotiations that took place during the crisis reveal profound professional identification interrogations and impact both relationship and occupational well-being of health providers.