

**ETHICRISES® - WEB COURSE ON ETHICS IN SANITARY
CRISIS CONTEXTS FOR NURSING PROFESSIONALS**

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Abstract: Objective: to report on the production of a web course project on ethics in health crisis contexts for the continuing education of nursing professionals. Method: to report on the experience of technological production carried out in two stages: a documentary survey and the development of a web course. The survey was carried out on the portal of the Federal Nursing Council and the search selected legislation from the period 2020 to 2022. After analyzing the documentary corpus, the contents were listed and a web course project was developed. Results: 12 documents were selected. The web course project was organized into nine modules that highlight the main themes and topics to be covered throughout the course, providing an overview of the syllabus. It also emphasizes the educational resources to be used to enrich the learning experience, promoting interactivity and participant engagement. Final considerations: the production based on the documentary survey made it possible to develop a web course project that emphasizes the need for practice based on ethical principles in contexts of health crises in order to guarantee not only the quality of care, but also the integrity of nursing professionals and the reliability of the health system. The web course, thus, can mediate permanent education actions.

Key words: Ethics; Nurse Practitioners; Pandemics; Courses.

Introduction

Ethics is a set of principles that guides the actions and decisions of professionals in various fields, being particularly essential in healthcare, where we additionally have the responsibility for the well-being of others (Lechasseur et al., 2018). In nursing, ethics is a central foundation that guides professional conduct, patient care, and interpersonal relationships in the healthcare

environment. It represents not just a set of rules, but a deep moral commitment to promoting respect, dignity, and integrity in nursing practice (Cannaerts, Gastmans, & Casterlé, 2014; Lechasseur et al., 2018).

In scenarios of health emergencies, where the pressure on health systems is intense and critical decisions need to be made quickly, ethics becomes even more crucial for nursing professionals (Liu et al., 2022). Situations like pandemics, natural disasters, or public health crises require not only technical knowledge but also a solid ethical foundation to face complex ethical problems and dilemmas. The role of nurses in these moments goes beyond direct care as it involves making difficult decisions, such as the distribution of limited resources, prioritization of care, and ensuring equality in access to care (Dittborn et al., 2022). Furthermore, ethics in a health crisis demands continuous reflection on the impact of decisions made. The need to constantly re-evaluate protocols, consider the evolution of circumstances, and adjust strategies in real-time is an integral part of this context. This requires a proactive ethical approach, in which nursing professionals seek not only to follow pre-established guidelines but also to ethically adapt to the rapid and unpredictable changes that occur during a crisis, keeping the focus on patients' well-being and the integrity of the profession (Fauci et al., 2022).

In this context, the importance of uniting ethics and professional practice in nursing stands out as an essential foundation for dealing with health emergencies. It is crucial that professionals are prepared not only technically but also morally to face the ethical challenges that arise in these critical moments (Gebreheat & Teame, 2021).

With this purpose, gathering and understanding the ethical documents provided by the Federal Nursing Council (COFEn) becomes essential. These documents, which cover specific guidelines for emergency situations, offer valuable guidance for ethical practice in extreme situations, ensuring quality care aligned with the ethical principles of the profession.

The relevance of a documentary research on ethics in nursing during health crises allows for an in-depth understanding of the ethical guidelines established by regulatory bodies, provides a solid foundation for professional practice in critical situations, and enhances protocols and guidelines in response to new challenges or learnings arising from emergencies. Therefore, the aim is to report on the development of a web course project on ethics in contexts of health crises for the continuous education of nursing professionals.

Method

Experience report of technological production conducted in two stages: documental survey and development of a web Course project. The data collection

was carried out through direct access to the digital platform of the COFEn portal, in the legislation search section, and the search selected the legislation from the period 2020 to 2022. To guide the data collection, a documentary form was used with the following aspects: title, year, authorship, objectives, conclusions, and contents pertinent to the ethical dimension in contexts of sanitary emergencies. During the reading and screening of the material, laws, regulations, and resolutions that were no longer in force or that had been revoked were excluded.

The selection criterion involved choosing materials that directly addressed the topics “professional ethics,” “COVID-19 pandemic,” and “ethics in a pandemic or ethics in sanitary crises or ethics in sanitary emergencies.” The documental search ended with the acquisition of documents on the research theme on the COFEn digital platform. The documents were cataloged according to their publication chronology and availability on the official COFEn website. After reading, the selected ones were inserted into a spreadsheet in Microsoft Office Excel® software for better organization and analysis. The documental analysis began with a preliminary evaluation of each document, involving a critical review from different perspectives, including context, authorship, interests, reliability, nature of the text, and key concepts. It is worth noting that the analysis elements were adapted to the specific needs of the researcher.

After analyzing the documentary corpus, the contents were listed and a web course project was developed. As it is a study based exclusively on secondary data obtained through consultation with the portal of the Federal Council of the respective profession mentioned in MS Ordinance 639/2020, approval of the project by a Research Ethics Committee was not required.

Results

In the first stage, 12 documents were selected: six opinions, three resolutions, one COFEN decision, a manual, and a booklet on nursing practice during the Covid-19 pandemic. After analyzing the documentary corpus, the contents on the ethical dimension in contexts of sanitary crises were listed. These contents guided nursing professionals during the sanitary crisis experienced between 2020 and 2022 (Table 2).

Table 2 – Contents with interface with the ethical dimension according to the selected documents. Manaus, Amazonas, Brasil, 2023.

DOCUMENT	CONTENTS WITH INTERFACE WITH THE ETHICAL DIMENSION
TECNICAL CHAMBER OPINION CTAS-018/2020	This opinion shows that the collection of material for COVID-19 testing can be performed by the entire nursing team, as they have the technical and legal competence to carry it out.
TECNICAL CHAMBER OPINION CTAS-032/2020	This opinion allows the nurse, as a member of the health team, to prescribe medications, provided they are established in public health programs and in routines approved by the health institution. However, the effects of the medications that make up the therapeutic options for COVID-19 are controversial. Therefore, it can be stated that there are not enough studies to allow the nurse to prescribe such drugs safely.
TECNICAL CHAMBER OPINION CTAS-041/2020	This opinion deals with the protocol for welcoming and risk classification for suspected COVID-19 patients, which should ensure that their needs are met at the referenced Basic Health Unit.
TECHNICAL OPINION OF A FEDERAL COUSELOR N.101/2020	The opinion provides that "Engaging in activities in workplaces free from risks and harm and physical and psychological violence to workers' health, respecting human dignity and protecting the rights of nursing professionals." It guarantees the right of nursing professionals to "suspend activities, whether individual or collective, when the workplace does not offer safe conditions for professional practice and/or disrespects current legislation, except in urgent and emergency situations, having to immediately formalize their decision in writing or by email to the institution and the Regional Nursing Council."
TECNICAL CHAMBER OPINION CTLN-038/2020	The purpose of the opinion is to regulate and operationalize the measures to address the public health emergency of international importance provided for in art. 3 of Law No. 13,979, of February 6, 2020, arising from the COVID-19 epidemic, in which the Cofen/Coren Systems regulate the compliance of prescriptions via telemedicine.
COFEN MANUAL	The manual highlights that nursing professionals can perform their activities safely. The document guides nursing teams in welcoming patients and was published to also meet a demand from the category itself, aiming at the safety of professionals who are generally the first to come into contact with the risk of COVID-19.
COFEN BOOKLET	The booklet with guidelines for organizing Nursing services, published by Cofen in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic highlights, in addition to the importance of the availability of PPE, its correct use with the proper guidance of nursing teams for higher safety of professionals, as highlighted in Law 7,498/86 and Cofen Resolution 564/2017.
NORMATIVE OPINION N.02/2020	The opinion states that it is up to Cofen to establish the framework for the necessary number of professionals to provide Nursing care during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the ideal quantity for safe patient care in General Hospitals, Field Hospitals, Semi-Intensive Units/Stabilization Rooms, and Intensive Care Units.
COFEN RESOLUTION N.634/2020	The resolution highlights the importance of nurses' participation in combating the pandemic through consultations, clarifications, referrals, and guidance, especially during these moments of social isolation, when people need access to reliable information and the possibility of care without traveling to health units.
COFEN RESOLUTION N.636/2020	The resolution indicates that nursing professionals are the main contingent of healthcare workers and that they are on the front lines in serving the population in Brazilian public, private, and philanthropic health units, from primary healthcare to medium and high complexity care. Therefore, it considers the need to join efforts with public health authorities in combating the pandemic.
COFEN DECISION N.49/2021	The decision indicates the need to update the Guidelines for Inspection, in order to guide the management of the Regional Nursing Councils to reorganize the activities of inspectors with the aim of verifying the minimum compliance with nursing professional standards for the care of COVID-19 patients admitted to General Hospitals, Field Hospitals, Semi-Intensive Treatment Units/Stabilization Rooms, and Intensive Care Units (ICUs).
COFEN RESOLUTION Nº 706/2022	The resolution establishes procedural norms to be applied in ethical processes within the scope of the Cofen/Regional Nursing Councils System. The Ethical Process Code establishes procedures for the initiation, instruction, and judgment of ethical processes and the application of penalties related to the investigation of violations of the Code of Ethics for Nursing Professionals. The investigation and judgment of violations of the Code of Ethics for Nursing Professionals will adhere, among others, to the principles of legality, morality, publicity, efficiency, purpose, motivation, reasonableness, proportionality, ample defense, adversarial process, legal security, and public interest.

In the second stage, after analyzing the documentary corpus, the contents were listed, and a web course project was developed. The first version is called the Professional Ethics Training Course for Nursing Teams in Contexts of Sanitary Crises (ETHICrises®). ETHICrises® is a fully virtual course proposal. All classes, once prepared and recorded, will be broadcast via the MEET Platform, and supporting material will be made available via GOOGLE DRIVE.

ETHICrises® clearly and concisely presents general data such as modality, workload, duration, and target audience. Additionally, it emphasizes the educational objectives of the course, providing a general and specific overview of the goals to be achieved. In other words, it is multifaceted and based on the need to train nursing professionals to face ethical challenges in health emergency scenarios. The course conceptions were carefully integrated, outlining the philosophical and pedagogical approach and the principles that guide the educational proposal. It is based on the view that effective learning goes beyond mere information absorption, being an active process of knowledge construction.

Regarding the syllabus, the developed material highlights the main themes and topics to be covered throughout the course, providing an overview of the program content. Additionally, it emphasizes the educational resources to be used to enrich the learning experience, promoting interactivity and participant engagement. These educational resources adopted in the course include instructional and formative content in digital and interactive formats, providing a disruptive approach. Multimedia materials such as video lessons and PDF documents are indicated to promote a variety of learning styles.

The course's evaluation system was carefully outlined, detailing the methodology and criteria to be applied to measure participants' performance. The material also addresses the necessary infrastructure for conducting the course, indicating the technological and logistical resources required for effective participation. It is worth noting that certification is included in the material, outlining the criteria and procedures related to participants' certification upon course completion. The process of constructing the educational technology was conducted in a visual and structured way, ensuring clarity, cohesion, and effectiveness in the educational proposal presented (Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3).

Figure 1- Syllabus of ETHICrises® - Modules 1 to 3. Manaus, AM, Brasil, 2024.



Ementa

O curso foi estruturado em 9 módulos que abordará diversos "Temas".

- **Módulo 1 - O ambiente virtual como estratégia de aprendizagem em enfermagem CH: 4h**
Exploração de plataformas virtuais e ferramentas educacionais para aprimorar o ensino em enfermagem, com foco em estratégias de aprendizagem online e a integração eficaz da tecnologia no processo educacional e do trabalho.
- **Módulo 2 - Introdução aos conceitos de vigilância sanitária, com ênfase em situações de crise sanitárias CH: 8h**
Serão explorados conceitos essenciais relacionados a emergências sanitárias, surtos, endemias, epidemias e pandemias. O conteúdo abordará a importância da vigilância sanitária como instrumento de prevenção, detecção e resposta a eventos que impactam a saúde pública.
- **Módulo 3 - Ética, bioética e moral na prática profissional CH: 10h**
Análise dos princípios éticos fundamentais na enfermagem, com ênfase em situações de crise sanitária. Desenvolvimento de habilidades de reflexão moral, tomada de decisão ética e comunicação ética em ambientes de trabalho e na prática profissional. Discutir os princípios fundamentais da bioética clínica e a bioética de intervenção.



Figure 2- Syllabus of ETHICrises® - Modules 4 to 6. Manaus, AM, Brasil, 2024.



Ementa

O curso foi estruturado em 9 módulos e cada unidade abordará diversos "Temas".

- **Módulo 4 - Lei 7498/86 sobre o Exercício Profissional da Enfermagem e Resolução CH: 4h**
Serão abordados os principais pontos dessa legislação, destacando as atribuições específicas, o exercício profissional da enfermagem por profissionais habilitados, a contratação e provimento de cargos e funções.
- **Módulo 5 - Resolução 564/2017 - Código de Ética dos Profissionais de Enfermagem (Parte I) CH: 6h**
Análise da primeira parte do Código de Ética dos Profissionais de Enfermagem, com destaque para os princípios éticos e responsabilidades profissionais, direitos e deveres. Aplicabilidades dos conceitos e normas em crises sanitárias.
- **Módulo 6 - Resolução 564/2017 - Código de Ética dos Profissionais de Enfermagem (Parte II) CH: 6h**
Continuação da análise do Código de Ética, explorando aspectos como sigilo profissional, relações com a equipe de saúde, infrações e da aplicação das penalidade para o profissional de enfermagem. Aplicabilidades dos conceitos e normas em crises sanitárias.





Ementa

O curso foi estruturado em 9 módulos e cada unidade abordará diversos "Temas".

- **Módulo 7 - Resoluções e Pareceres de análise dos impactos da Pandemia da COVID-19 nos profissionais de enfermagem CH: 6h**
Exploração das resoluções e pareceres relacionados à pandemia da COVID-19, com análise dos impactos específicos nos profissionais de enfermagem, utilizando dados do Observatório COFEN.
- **Módulo 8 - Ética profissional no contexto da pandemia da COVID-19 CH: 10h**
Análise aprofundada dos desafios éticos enfrentados pelos profissionais de enfermagem durante a pandemia da COVID-19, abordando questões de tomada de decisão, comunicação e responsabilidade profissional.
- **Módulo 9 - A construção de um perfil ético do profissional de enfermagem CH: 6h**
Abordagem dos princípios éticos fundamentais, destacando a importância da integridade, responsabilidade e respeito na prática profissional. Os participantes serão guiados através de situações práticas e problemas éticos comuns na enfermagem, promovendo a reflexão crítica e o desenvolvimento de habilidades para tomada de decisões éticas.



Figura 3- Syllabus of ETHICrises® - Modules 7 to 9. Manaus, AM, Brasil, 2024.

Discussion

Ethics encompasses a scientific, philosophical, and sometimes theological analysis of customs and human actions, and is also associated with the conformity of life to the standards considered correct. It can be both the study of these actions and customs as well as the practical application of specific behavior (Valls, 2017). In contemporary times, professional ethics refers to the set of technical and social behaviors required by a specific class from its members. Adherence to a code of conduct identifies the professional as ethical, ensuring recognition from peers and society in general (Borges & Medeiros, 2006).

To guide conduct and responsibilities, each category has its own code of ethics, in other words, each profession has its own deontology. Behaviors are considered "ethical" according to pre-established norms, so that their observance can be coercively enforced by supervisory bodies (Souza et al., 2021). The Code of Ethics is a legal instrument, with norms and principles related to the practice of Nursing, presenting what is expected of the professional's conduct. In Brazil, the first Nursing Code of Ethics was approved in 1958, undergoing reformulations in 1975, 1993, 2000, and 2007, until reaching its current version in 2017 (Oguisso & Zoboli, 2017).

In this context, the laws and guidelines issued by the Federal Nursing Council (COFEn) during the COVID-19 pandemic represent fundamental milestones in the orientation and regulation of nursing professionals' practices in Brazil. These documents, of crucial importance, were published to delineate the responsibilities and performance of nurses, obstetricians, nursing assistants, and

towards standardization and specific guidance for the performance of these professionals in crisis situations (Poikkeus et al., 2014).

The guidelines play a crucial role in guiding and directing health professionals during health crises. By establishing boundaries and responsibilities, they ensure ethical and safe practice, offering parameters for clinical decision-making, proper resource distribution, and emergency situation management. Moreover, they provide a legal framework that protects not only nursing professionals but also the population served by these professionals (Silva et al., 2018; Reis et al., 2022).

Clear regulations and specific guidelines are fundamental for the proper management of health crises. Scientific studies and analyses have reinforced the importance of ethical and legal guidelines to guide health professionals, especially nursing professionals, in emergencies, ensuring the safety of patients and the professionals themselves (Falcó-Pegueroles et al., 2021; Mavis Mulaudzi et al., 2021).

The guidelines and directives emanating from the documents have significantly contributed to nursing practice during the health crisis as they clearly outline the responsibilities of each category of nursing professionals, establishing boundaries and precise definitions of their roles. This clarity is fundamental to ensuring effective and ethical practice during times of crisis, allowing professionals to understand their roles and responsibilities more accurately (Aydogdu, 2022).

Final Remarks

The production based on documental research enabled the development of a web course project that emphasizes the need for practice based on ethical principles in the context of health crises, to ensure not only the quality of care but also the integrity of nursing professionals and the reliability of the health system. Thus, the web course can mediate continuous education actions.

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