# Moral distress of oncology nurses and morally distressing situations in oncology units


## ABSTRACT

**Objective**
The purpose of this study was to evaluate the intensity and frequency of moral distress and determine clinical situations leading to moral distress in oncology units. The study also examined the relationship between moral distress scores and demographic characteristics of oncology nurses.

**Design**
This descriptive study was performed between 25 January 2012 and 29 June2013.

**Setting**
The study was conducted in the oncology units of eight training hospitals in Tehran, Iran.

**Subjects**
One hundred and forty eight nurses (131 females, 17 males; mean age 32.5 years; range 24 to52 years) who had worked in oncology units of training hospitals in Tehran were included in the study.

**Main outcome measure(s)**
The main outcome measures included intensity and frequency of moral distress, which were assessed by the Moral Distress Scale – Revised (MDS-R).

**Results**
Most of the 148 nurses had high to moderate scores. Nurses had experienced higher moral distress when receiving informed consent forms from patients and asking patients to carry out physicians' order for unnecessary tests in patients' last stages of life.

**Conclusion**
Moral distress exists in oncology nurses and interventions will be developed and tested to decrease and prevent it.



**KEY WORDS**
moral distress, nurses, oncology