

# Ethics in higher education in healthcare: an integrative review

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## Abstract

Integrative review aimed to examine how ethics in higher education in health is addressed in the literature from January 2006 to December 2011, research conducted by the SciELO and PubMed. Twelve articles met the inclusion criteria and the areas were most prominently Medicine (6), Dentistry (3) and Nursing (2), one published in conjunction with the area of Social Work, and an article on Public Health. Through content analysis, were elected two thematic categories: methods and strategies of teaching and learning evaluation of ethics. The analysis indicated that the issues involved in the teaching and learning of ethics are complex and include uncertainties and diversity of opinions and moral values. Students should work with the theme in disciplines with cross-cutting approach, the opportunity to exchange ideas and reflect on the issues.

**Keywords:** Teaching. Ethics. Health

## Resumo

### A ética no ensino superior na área de saúde: uma revisão integrativa

Revisão integrativa com o objetivo de analisar como a ética no ensino superior na área de saúde é abordada na literatura, no período de janeiro de 2006 a dezembro de 2011, mediante pesquisa realizada nas bases SciELO e PubMed. Doze artigos preencheram os critérios de inclusão e as áreas com maior destaque foram Medicina (6), Odontologia (3) e Enfermagem (2), um deles publicado em conjunto com a área de Serviço Social, e um artigo sobre Saúde Pública. Por meio da análise de conteúdo, foram eleitas duas categorias temáticas: métodos e estratégias de ensino e avaliação da aprendizagem da ética. A análise indicou que as questões envolvidas no ensino-aprendizagem da ética são complexas e incluem incertezas e diversidade de opiniões e valores morais. Os alunos devem trabalhar com o tema em disciplinas com abordagem transversal, oportunidade de trocar ideias e refletir sobre as questões.

**Palavras-chave:** Ensino. Ética. Saúde.

## Resumen

### Ética en la educación superior em salud: una revisión integrativa

Revisión integrativa con el fin de realizar el análisis de cómo la ética en la educación superior en salud se aborda en la literatura desde enero 2006 hasta diciembre de 2011, a través de la investigación realizada en la base de datos PubMed y SciELO. Doce artículos cumplieron los criterios de inclusión y las áreas con mayor énfasis en las publicaciones fueron Medicina (6), Odontología (3) Enfermería (2), incluyendo uno de ellos publicado conjuntamente con el área de Servicios Sociales y un artículo en Salud Pública. A través del análisis de contenido, se eligieron dos categorías temáticas: métodos y estrategias para la enseñanza y la evaluación del aprendizaje de la ética. El análisis indicó que las cuestiones relacionadas con la enseñanza-aprendizaje de la ética son complejas e incluyen las incertidumbres y la diversidad de opiniones y valores morales. Los estudiantes deben trabajar con el tema en las disciplinas con enfoque transversal como una oportunidad para intercambiar ideas y reflexionar sobre estas cuestiones.

**Palabras-clave:** Enseñanza. Ética. Salud.

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Ethics is the study of the conduction and the character. Relates itself with the determination of what is good or valuable to the individuals, groups of people and to the society in general. Acts considered ethical reflect the commitment with the standards beyond personal preferences - standards which individuals, professions and societies strive to achieve <sup>1</sup>.

Professional ethics and deontology compiles, for professionals, the guiding principles in their interaction with patients, other professionals and with the institutions where they work <sup>2</sup>. Ethics and morality are complementary terms. Ethics, from the Greek *ethos*, means "way of being", "character". Moral, from the Latin *mor* or *moris*, means "custom", that is, a set of standards or rules acquired by humans by ordinary use <sup>3-4</sup>.

In professional relationships, ethics substantiates by responsibility, commitment with work and with each other, as well as by the respect and affection to people. Therefore, ethics develops itself in professional relationships when attitudes, values and skills are built within the exercise of this practice <sup>5</sup>.

In healthcare, the ethical competence of future professionals is understood as the autonomous capacity of perception, critical thinking and coherent decision regarding human behavior in healthcare and life. The development of this competence requires qualified professors who are willing to assume the debate of aspects related to the educational practice, in order to promote a student-centered formation and qualified for the society which depends on and subsidizes this training <sup>6</sup> - this requires that professors themselves develop skills as criticism and reflection.

In the scenario of changes in human rights and sciences, bioethics arises. However, according to Pessini, who first used the neologism *bioethics* was Fritz Jahr in 1927, in Germany. Jahr extended the Kantian categorical imperative and proposed the bioethical imperative: *respect every living being as an end in itself and treat it, if possible, as such*. The launch of the book *Fritz Jahr and the foundations of global bioethics : the future of integrative bioethics* at the VIII International Congress of Clinical Bioethics, held in 2012 in São Paulo, represents a worldwide historical fact in this incursion in relation to the beginnings of bioethics <sup>7</sup>.

According to Van Rensselaer Potter, bioethics is configured as the ethics of survival, of life and of living being <sup>8</sup>. It is characterized by its philosophical, scientific and sociopolitical aspects. For its emergence there were contributions of technological and

individual rights advancement, the influence of multiculturalism in society and the changes in doctor-patient relationship. This new approach of ethics is related to the complexity and possibility of opening for contributions of diverse disciplines and a wider debate with society <sup>9</sup>.

Numerous social, ethical, economic and political changes have been observed worldwide, which have starkly hit health systems. It has been intensified then the enormous challenge to conduct it, both for actors involved in the planning and attention in healthcare and for the institutions that represents human resources for the sector <sup>10</sup>. Training institutions responsible for professionalization must adapt themselves to ensure that knowledge given to the student body is consistent with solutions to new social, ethical and economic paradigms that arise in the process of building the health system <sup>11</sup>.

Ethical education grounded only in conceptual discussions is not sufficient to train professionals that the present moment demands. A new paradigm in health was established in Latin America and the need for change in the training methodologies of health professionals has been debated extensively. This new model of health requires new social actors, new forms of service provision and new ways to train professionals of this area <sup>12</sup>.

Traditionally, the teaching of ethics in Brazilian nursing schools has been characterized by a deontological view, determined by normative and prescriptive guidance, restricted to a set of standards and codes worked abstractly and theoretically <sup>13-14</sup>. The desired profile of the undergraduate nursing courses in Brazil refers to a professional capable of intervening in low, medium and high complexity health services. On the one hand, technoscience centered in high complexity hospitals and diagnostic centers; on the other hand, hunger, poverty, injustice, political corruption, resource allocation and distribution of health services put the nurse in a dichotomized context, which requires critical thinking to make ethical and moral decisions <sup>15</sup>.

Since 1990, the theme of medical ethics has become an integral part of the core curriculum in most medical schools of Western countries. However, the formal inclusion of medical ethics in the medical curriculum resulted in the emergence of a variety of programs on ethics with different goals and multiple methods. The presentation and evaluation methods in ethics may vary widely among medicine graduate programs, even within the same country <sup>16-18</sup>.

In the medical course curriculum of some Brazilian universities – in its traditional format, Bioethics is included as a discipline aimed to guide the development of skills that could enable students to identify and analyze ethical problems. But only some of these topics are included in disciplines of Forensic Medicine and Deontology, which generally prioritize the Code of Medical Ethics (CME) and the legal aspects of medical practice. Perhaps these contents are not sufficient to meet the needs of students regarding ethical conflicts with which they will come across in academic practice and in their future professional life <sup>19</sup>.

Thus, this study aimed to survey how the ethics in higher education in health is addressed in the literature, through the integrative review.

## Method

It is about an integrative review of scientific papers on the teaching of ethics in higher education in healthcare. The integrative review allows the reader to recognize those professionals who most investigate a specific subject, to detach the scientific findings from opinions and ideas, and to describe the knowledge in its current state, promoting impact on the clinical practice. This research method provides healthcare professionals relevant data about a particular subject, in different places and times, keeping them updated and facilitating changes in clinical practice as a result of research <sup>20</sup>.

The integrative review works with evidences. So in researches of scientific discovery, it was decided to consult the Virtual Health Library using SciELO databases (Scientific Electronic Library Online) and PubMed. Articles published from January 2006 to December 2011 were selected. Key-words used were: teaching, ethics and health.

In the first phase, articles titles were read and to clarify any doubts, some abstracts were read. The selected publications met the following inclusion criteria: articles in Portuguese, English and Spanish; direct relationship with descriptors; to be public domain; to be available online and to be published within 2006 to 2011. Excluding articles that did not meet these criteria, a total of 607 studies were found in the PubMed database and 32 articles in SciELO.

After applied the inclusion criteria, 12 articles were selected and classified by date of publication, journal title and production area. The thematic content analysis technique was used. It consists of separating a text into units (categories), according to analogical regrouping <sup>20</sup>. The analysis is done in multiple stages comprising data order; reading or float reading – that is to establish contact with documents of data collection, a moment to meet content through contact with the subject; data classification, by the constitution of the analytical organization *corpus* identified through exploration and categorization of materials; and processing of results and interpretation <sup>21</sup>.

## Results and Discussion

According to the results, the area with the highest number of publications was Medicine, with six articles (50%), followed by Dentistry, with three articles (25%), Nursing, with two articles (16.6%), one being prepared in conjunction with the area of Social Work, and an article (8.3%) on the master's program in Public Health - indicating that, while not abundant, studies and researches are conducted on the topic in the professions of health.

This data is consistent with research findings that evaluated the teaching of ethics courses in health area through integrative review, conducted from January 1997 to January 2009, where it was identified that 73.08% of the publications were related to the Medicine course. The authors stated that this result was due to the fact that the *medical profession was the first to take shape in health and followed the various ethical questions for which science and humanity have been through* <sup>21</sup>. Indeed, the first known ethical document known, the Hippocratic Oath was written more than two thousand years ago. With this, it can be understood that the subject has deepened more into medicine field than in other health professions <sup>22</sup>.

The journal with the largest number of selected articles was the *Journal of Medical Ethics* with three publications, and then, the *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* magazine, with two. The other journals had the frequency of one article for volume. Table 1 lists the number of articles published by the journal.

**Table 1.** Number of selected journal articles by January 2006 to December 2011.

Journal	No de articles	Year of publication
<i>Journal of Medical Ethics</i>	3	2007
<i>Ciência &amp; Saúde Coletiva</i>	2	2009 e 2011
<i>Revista Médica de Chile</i>	1	2011
<i>Journal of Dental Education</i>	1	2010
<i>Journal of Family &amp; Community Medicine</i>	1	2010
<i>American Journal of Bioethics</i>	1	2008
<i>Sociedade Brasileira de Pesquisa Odontológica</i>	1	2006
<i>Revista Brasileira de Educação Médica</i>	1	2010
<i>Acta Paulista de Enfermagem</i>	1	2006
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	

The years of 2007 and 2010 relied on three publications each, followed by 2011 and 2006 with two annual publications and the years of 2008 and 2009 one publication each. To deepen the understanding on the subject, two categories from which the materials of the articles were analyzed, were elected: methods and strategies of teaching and learning evaluation of ethics.

Table 2, at the end, illustrates a summary of the twelve selected articles for the production of this paperwork, bringing the country of origin, level of education addressed, if public or private university, methodology, objectives and outcomes of each article.

### Method and teaching strategies

With respect to the research findings based on the twelve articles, the contexts, conflicts of living and working should be the backdrop of teaching and learning of ethics, on which students and teachers

establish a dialogue. The real and direct experience of collective life and the process of work in health are the contexts in which the teaching and learning of ethics occur more effectively. So it is important an environment in where ethics and practice of ethics are reality. Despite the questioning and problem-based learning referred as models of effective teaching, educators must substantiate their practice in a particular theory of knowledge for a moral training. Adopting methodologies and innovative means are not sufficient if the professor does not have a structured pedagogical conception to support and direct their educational practice<sup>15</sup>.

Understanding that knowledge is concretized through mental representations that the subject establishes, from his relationship with the object and this same object with others, leads us to state that problematic, as a category of knowledge construction, is a viable alternative for the teaching of ethics and bioethics. The problematization requires experimentation, teamwork and research as elements of inducement, of challenge, of significance for various pedagogical activities<sup>23</sup>.

The potential of ethics as transverse axis in health education is especially true at the time of the biomedical paradigm crisis and the restructuring health curriculum. It is important to invest in the transdisciplinarity of course disciplines with the aim of putting into society service professionals who seek improvement not only of theoretical and technical skills, but also the development of social and personal skills, encouraging constant exercise of self-criticism in the natural process of activities of all basic and professional disciplines<sup>24</sup>.

About the transversality of ethics and bioethics teaching, and assuming that the purpose of this teaching is the moral development of the student, it is observed that a single discipline cannot provide all the resources needed for such a goal to be reached, since it is considered a long-term process, complex and comprehensive. One of the strategies suggested for the inclusion of these disciplines in the development of curriculum is the transversal approach<sup>25-26</sup>, meaning that various curricular areas should plan activities related to moral education.

Education for ethical training given transversely and inserted in all subjects / modules / curriculum units does not relieve educators to work on specific

methodologies and teaching strategies that would promote dialogic reflection. The transversality of ethics teaching cannot be restricted to disordered and occasional activities. The curriculum, in its entirety, must be designed to prioritize this knowledge / skill from the first to the last year: driven by a sufficiently precise and properly sequenced proposal in relation to goals and performance to be achieved. It is imperative, though, the presence of contents related to experienced events in professional life and articulated with the work process, and constant encouragement for that *práxis*, procedures and values<sup>25</sup>, is driven by proposal of constant reflection and inhibiting the mechanization of labor activity.

Study conducted in order to investigate the relationship between ethics and education, by surveying the practice of nurses and social workers, indicated that although it is widely recognized that ethical issues are ubiquitous in healthcare, only 57% of nurses and social workers interviewed had ethics education and training in graduation or in more advanced professional training programs (*lato* or *stricto sensu*). The data shows that education and training in ethics have significant influence on professional confidence, providing resources to act ethically and morally<sup>27</sup>.

In Medical field, in which ethical behavior is discussed more often when compared with the Dentistry field, evidences indicate that ethically inappropriate and inhumane attitudes are often observed not only in the clinical professionals, but also in professors. Failure to comply with ethical principles can be easily identified in a number of scenarios in the healthcare system, including medical schools, and extending itself to professor-professor, professor-student and doctor-patient relationship<sup>28-29</sup>.

Although these data can cause concern, this problem is not peculiar to Brazil. Bioethicists from several countries, including Canada, Chile, Japan and the United States of America (USA), agree that currently the bioethics education does not meet the needs of societies in their countries<sup>4, 7-9</sup>. Although bioethics education cannot overcome all the irregularities that might occur in the clinic area and in researches involving human beings, undergraduate programs must value it in such way that a positive impact is generated on students' scientific training<sup>30-32</sup>.

Therefore, the teaching of bioethics in post-graduate programs, especially in the field of Dentistry, should aim at training professionals for when in interaction with colleagues, they are familiar and able to use the basic aspects of ethical behavior during clinical researches using animal experiments

and, above all, with patients and research volunteers. This ethical behavior includes the correct presentation of the Informed Consent Form (ICF) throughout the whole research<sup>33</sup>.

Despite of the importance identified in the ethics and bioethics study through the reviewed works, there is not, however, a unique approach to the teaching of these subjects in any area of health and especially in Dentistry<sup>34</sup>. At London Kings College, ethics and law is taught during the first two years through lectures and small group sessions<sup>35</sup>. Research conducted with the aim of describing the didactical approach used to teach dental ethics and ethical thinking to first-year students of the Dentistry Faculty of British Columbia University, stresses that ethics has its place in dental education as a virtue expected within students, who will become licensed professionals and accountable to the public, government and regulatory bodies, as well as to colleagues.

Studies state that to meet these expectations directed to the student's training period it is vital to make the study of ethics experiential and relevant to students, which is a challenge in itself<sup>36</sup>. Workshops and debates are conducted in small groups so that students can interact, debate, present and defend their ethical convictions<sup>37-38</sup>. In this context, the present study found that problem-based learning has also been used as an effective way to teach ethics. Although the teaching of dental ethics cannot guarantee ethical training of dentists, dental educators should advocate and work to improve the content of ethics in the education of Dentistry<sup>39</sup>.

### Assessment of learning ethics

This study analyzed ten articles which analyzed the learning of ethics. For the evaluations were used methods such as questionnaires, interviews and cases debates involving situations of an ethical nature, classifying the courses and their pedagogical proposals for the teaching of ethics and bioethics according to student's responses.

Data from research conducted with the objective of evaluating the teaching of bioethics programs in Brazilian post-graduate in Dentistry showed that 45 % of these programs do not offer any kind of bioethics teaching - high percentage, if compared to U.S. studies, where the percentage of dental schools with no bioethics course was 21 % fifteen years ago<sup>39</sup>. In this context, the study results suggest that this fact does not constitute high concern - the bioethics debate in the education of post-graduate students

-, considering that only 52 % and 65% of public and private institutions, respectively, had bioethics or ethics in their post-graduate programs. Additionally, only 38% of top rated post-graduate programs (grades 5, 6 or 7 in the Advisory Committee on Personnel of Superior Level / Capes) had courses in ethics or bioethics, while 62% of programs with worse ratings (grades 3 and 4) had ethics or bioethics course. Thus, the results of this study represent a warning to educators involved in teaching Dentistry research. It also showed that education in bioethics is still incipient in post-graduate programs in Dentistry in Brazil, despite the resolution 196/96 of the National Health Council being published ten years ago. For this reason, it would be necessary to insure an ethical pedagogy in the training of young researchers<sup>40</sup>.

In Saudi Arabia, a research aiming to describe the evaluation of a Medical Ethics graduation course, participants rated as subject worthy of study and comprehension, and not being analyzed only by the common sense perspective. The study also revealed that the discipline is important for the professors, in order to meet the need for training of future physicians, enabling them to deal with ethical dilemmas which are likely to be faced with clinical practice. Most of the course content was recommended in their curriculum. Most of the participant students agreed that the course content was relevant and in tune with their culture, but significant minority disagreed. That may be due to the fact that the students have not been exposed to clinical practice or the college's failure on treating the subject<sup>41</sup>.

In a research on the teaching of medical ethics for undergraduate students in South Africa, it was found that the course teaches about respect for the person and for life, towards patients and community, and with the willingness to act fairly and ethically responsible to the profession, seeking to alert students to recognize the limitations of their own knowledge and skills. Intending that the students could identify ethical dilemmas that arise during the practice, and its resolution, the students were evaluated in an ethics test in the fifth year. So far, in all of these areas, students demonstrated good skills to solve those problems<sup>42</sup>.

A research within a course of medicine in Brazil corroborates these findings by pointing out that the longer exposure to ethics contents, the higher the possibility of learning, considering the amount of correct outcomes between the first (13.97 %) and sixth grade (16.77%) in response to a questionnaire. The authors also report that there is no significant

difference when comparing different pedagogical models. It was found in the results a significant difference between the average of correct outcomes, of 17.15% for students within the traditional method and 16.51% for the method of problem-based learning<sup>43</sup>. The results contradict the statement that the course methodology can influence the learning of ethics<sup>9</sup>.

The clinical stages of higher education courses in healthcare represent for professors an important moment: to assess whether the student has the ability to apply what was taught during the lectures - which is required in the practical application of ethics principles, analyzing the student's behavior with the profession. For these contents to be assimilated and incorporated into future professional practice, they must be administered consistently and progressively throughout the course, presented in all disciplines in order to promote transdisciplinarity and evaluated in a relevant manner, considering the ethics and bioethics as the legitimate focus of good professional training.

## Final Considerations

An analysis of articles published nationally and internationally in the period of January 2006 to December 2011 was run using the descriptors of education, ethics and health. Twelve articles were in accord with the inclusion criteria. It was found that there were productions of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing and Social Work professions, among the 14 healthcare professions. There was a predominance of publications in the field of Medicine, followed by Dentistry, Nursing, Social Work and a Master's program in Public Health.

Content analysis of the items indicated two theme categories. In the first one, on methods and teaching strategies, revealed the transversal approach to include the teaching of ethics in the curriculum elaboration, meaning that diverse curriculum areas should plan activities for moral education. The second one, regarding learning evaluation, has indicated different forms of assessment that are used in courses on the topic: the ethics exam, workshops, and small group debates. In this category it can be highlighted the importance of clinical practice and the increasing knowledge about ethics, related to the time course of the student.

The issues involved in the teaching and learning of ethics are complex and usually include uncertainties and diversity of opinions and moral values .

Students should work with the theme in disciplines with a transversal approach and the opportunity to exchange ideas and reflect on issues.

Considering the limitations of this present study regarding the inclusion criteria, it is seen as

needed further and deeper investigations that would follow the student and the teaching of ethics during the undergraduate and post-graduate levels, as well as raising awareness about the issue under professional area.

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#### Authors' participation

All the authors have participated on the construction of the article, collection, analysis and synthesis of the information given.



**Table 2.** Summary of characteristics of selected articles

Art.	Country	Level of Education	University	Methodology	Goals	Results
1	Brazil	Graduation	Public	Qualitative, Descriptive study	Outlining the panorama of ethics training courses in the Brazilian dental courses.	Pointed punctual commitment of the Dentistry courses with ethic dimension of the professional formation and indicated deficiencies about the related contents in the cultural, humanistic and political formation.
2	Brazil	Graduation	Public	Qualitative, transversal analytics, observational	Evaluate the perception of the medical students about the ethical conflicts	It was observed that the ethical education is underexplored in the University, despite of its importance. It was concluded that by the necessity of great commitment with the education focused in humanization of the medicine practice, with more prepared professors, better infrastructure and a reform in the curriculum to prioritize the ethical education.
3	Canada	Graduation	Public (University British Columbia)	Qualitative	Describe the didactic approach used to teach ethics in the course of odontology	The conclusion for the need of more debates to the better “understand the implications of ethical issues” in the academic and professional areas. Indicates that the education on dental ethics should not be limited by one discipline or year. For a meaningful ethical thinking, reinforced, integrated along the course, during all the extension of the course.
4	Saudi Arabia	Graduation	Public	Qualitative, thru the questionnaires to students of medicine	Explore the perception of the medicine students about the course modules	All the students defended the importance of ethical learning, including the professional development, evaluation of ethical skills and the study of ethic itself.
5	Brazil	Graduation	Privated	Qualitative	Analyze the perception of the medical students about the ethical relationships involved in the actions of health in the community	Common ethical perceptions among the students of 1 <sup>a</sup> and 2 <sup>a</sup> grade that involve activities whit the community, notably the presence of speeches that indicate differentiated ethical formation among other medical schools. It was also observed that opinions of the sick people were not considered, situation that must be debated during the graduation.

Art.	Country	Level of Education	University	Methodology	Goals	Results
6	EUA	Social Works and nurses	Public (Research center of Virginia University)	Unique Questionnaires for both groups of professionals; statistical analyzes	Investigate the ethical relation between the courses of nursing and social works	14% of the participants did not have ethical education. Those with ethical, professional or continued education showed themselves more confident in their moral judgments and more likely used tools of ethics in their professional environment. The social workers had a more global formation, faced to ethics, tending to use more this feature than nurses.
7	South Africa	Graduation	Public	Qualitative	Knowing better the program of medical ethics in the Sciences of Health College.	It has concluded that the medical ethic program of the University is deficient and that the implementation of a base curriculum for all medical colleges in South Africa would significantly improve the medical studies' goal in the country.
8	Lithuania	Master	Public	Qualitative	Investigate the education experience of ethics in the master degree in public health and discuss its contents, abilities, education approach and tolls.	It was evident a series of challenges in the education of ethics in Lithuania. It showed that the subject debate is necessary for the professionals of health in training. It was considered that the subject of ethics in public health can help to improve the capacity of the workers in health for a better ethical decision in a complex work situation.
9	United Kingdom	Graduation	Public (Kings College London School of Medicine)	Qualitative	Perception of students in medicine graduation on ethics education	Most students indicated to prefer lectures and small study groups to promote debates on ethics. It was concluded that ethics and law teaching should be better addressed in the curriculum.
10	Brazil	Post-graduation	Public and private	Qualitative (87 programs of post-graduation in odontology)	To evaluate the teaching of bioethics programs in post-graduate courses in Dentistry from Brazil	The results emphasize the educators involved in teaching dental research. Show that education in bioethics is still incipient in post-graduate programs in Dentistry in Brazil. For this reason, it would be necessary to ensure an ethical pedagogy in the training of young researchers.

Art.	Country	Level of Education	University	Methodology	Goals	Results
11	Brazil	Graduation	Does not apply	Integrative review of scientific articles on the teaching of ethics in health courses	Analyze the teaching of ethics in graduate healthcare	Indicated that the exposure time to the content and its pervasive influence on the course subjects influences more intensively the learning of ethics, as well as the training and the ethical attitude of the professor.
12	Brazil	Graduation	Does not apply	Article of reflection.	Reflection of the philosophical and social aspects of the education on ethics \ bioethics for the moral development of the students of nursing in graduation.	It proposes to redirect the teaching of ethics in nursing from an approach centered on conceptual discussions of ethics to the teaching of transversal values through active methodologies. It demands from all involved in the teaching-learning an innovative approach which unleash new practices. It emphasizes the need to address a metaphysical teaching of ethics and bioethics courses, administering different postures that lead to the planning and implementation of projects for nursing education that integrates the teaching to reality.