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Challenges experienced by healthcare professionals working in resource poor intensive care settings in the Limpopo province of South Africa

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Background: Providing optimal care to critically ill patients poses challenges in resource poor settings due to the lack of equipment, inadequately trained personnel and limited infrastructure.

Purpose: The study explored challenges experienced by health care professionals working in resource poor intensive care units.

Methodology: A qualitative, explorative, descriptive design was used. The population comprised nurses and doctors working in intensive care unit of an hospital in the Limpopo province of South Africa. A purposive sample was selected at the participating hospital. Data were collected by means of 17 semi-structured interviews. Data were analyzed using Tesch's method. Ethical considerations were included.

Results: Some deserving patients were not admitted to the intensive care unit due to the limited number of available beds. Nurses acted beyond their scope of practice due to a lack of adequately trained intensive care specialists. Enrolled nurses were nursing ventilated patients due to lack of intensive care trained staff. Faculty equipment was used and "used once" pieces of equipment were reused.

Conclusions: Health professionals face these challenges due to lack of resources, poor communication between staff and family; poor decision-making in poor resource settings resulting in moral distress and depersonalization. Interventions to address these challenges are necessary in healthcare setting by provision of resources and building capacity of the work force in intensive care units.

Biography

Ramathuba D U pursued her PhD at North West University, RSA. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Nursing at the University of Venda, RSA. She is a Registered Professional Nurse, Oncology Nurse and a Nurse Administrator. She has published more than 25 papers in reputed journals and has been reviewing manuscripts from reputable journals and presented papers nationally and internationally.

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