

# MORAL DISTRESS IN DENTAL HYGIENIST'S OFFICE

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## INTRODUCTION:

The work deals with the topic of moral distress in dental hygienist's office. This is a very current topic. Moral distress is a problem leading to burnout. There is no research on this topic in the Czech Republic yet. The work has two parts, theoretical and practical. The theoretical part clearly describes the issue of moral distress, the practical part is focused on collecting data related to the topic.

## AIM:

The thesis aims to clearly describe the issue of moral distress in the field of practice of dental hygienists. The goal is also to find out how often dental hygienists encounter situations where they are exposed to moral distress, how they evaluate specific situations and how they feel in the long term in an environment that exposes them to such stressful situations.

## METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire with 21 questions was used. The first 2 mapped personal information. 6 questions aimed at more detailed information about practice, 13 questions are professional and aim at the experience of moral distress or morally dilemmatic situations in the respondent's practice. Filling in was anonymous from 1/29/2024 to 2/12/2024. The questionnaire was created in the Dotazniky application (cuni.cz) and was distributed to respondents by email.

## RESULTS:

The results show that 61% of the respondents experienced a morally dilemmatic situation in their practice and 49% of the respondents directly encountered moral distress. 100% of respondents affected by moral distress also feel less job satisfaction and work commitment. The experience of moral distress is not significantly influenced by the age or gender of the patient, the type of education, job content, or the nature of the work environment and equipment. The validity of the research is threatened by the low return rate of the questionnaire, only 8.6%. The questionnaire was sent to a total of 480 dental hygienists registered in the ADH CR, only 41 questionnaires were returned.

## CONCLUSION

The thesis was one of the first in the Czech Republic to address the issue of moral distress in the practice of dental hygienists. The theoretical part includes a clear description of moral distress, including its definition, types, causes, symptoms and consequences, types of measurement and compensation and coping strategies. The profession of dental hygienist is also described in relation to moral distress.

In the practical part, a survey was then conducted among dental hygienists in the Czech Republic through a questionnaire using a quantitative type of measurement of moral distress, as well as questions pertaining to qualitative measurement, which brought insight into the issue of moral distress in the practice of dental hygienists in the Czech Republic. It turned out that almost 50% of the interviewees suffered from moral distress during their practice, regardless of age, gender, education, job content or the nature of the work environment. Thus, moral distress is an issue that should not be neglected, but should be remembered with all seriousness.