

## Background

- Nursing, physiotherapy and medicine are inherently morally loaded practices.
- **Western countries are facing a worrying qualified healthcare professionals' (HcP) shortage. The improvement of their wellbeing and their engagement in the profession should become a priority among stakeholders.**
- Not properly addressed ethical concerns can lead to moral distress and in the worse case to a premature abandonment of the profession (Jameton 1984).
- Understanding these situations and if there are any commonalities can offer a broader insight into the phenomena and possibly offer some recommendations among HcP.
- Ethical concerns are strictly related to the professional setting; therefore, we focus on ethical issues experienced by healthcare professionals working with **outpatients**.

## Research question

*Which are the ethical concerns mostly experienced among nurses, physicians and physiotherapists working with outpatients? Are there any commonalities among these professionals?*

## Methods

- We considered for this scoping review n=65 articles retrieved from PubMed, CINHAL, EMBASE, Google Scholar published between 1984 to 2017 (see fig.1).
- These articles were organized according to the profession (nursing, medicine and physiotherapy) and to the nature of moral issues.

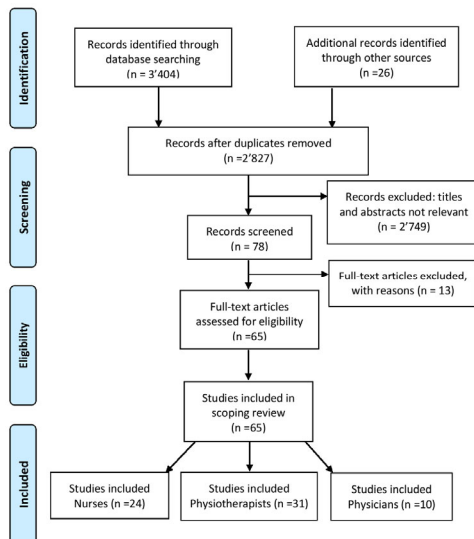


Fig.1

Moher et al 2009

## Results

Based on the results of the literature review we identified four main categories of ethical concerns:

### Relationship Between Colleagues Stakeholders And Insurances Interprofessional Collaboration Patient And Families Interactions

NURSE	PHYSIOTHERAPIST	PHYSICIAN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patients refusing care</li> <li>• Lack of confidence in nurses</li> <li>• Life prolonging treatment and tests vs. quality of life</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge resulting in inadequate care</li> <li>• Disagreement about care evaluating practices or interventions with other colleagues</li> <li>• Truth telling</li> <li>• Issues with management</li> <li>• Own limitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asymmetrical power</li> <li>• Maintaining professional boundaries</li> <li>• Managing end-of life situations</li> <li>• Obtaining informed consent</li> <li>• Professional responsibility</li> <li>• Disagreement about treatments with other HcP preferences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Other HcP suggest to the patient improper demands</li> <li>• Allocation of scarce resources</li> <li>• Chosen treatment collides with regulations for payments</li> <li>• Time or patient pressure</li> <li>• Refusing patients request</li> <li>• Request for euthanasia</li> <li>• Inability to attend referral</li> <li>• Own limitations</li> </ul>

## Discussion

- Bringing to light the commonalities between moral issues experienced by the three HcP can be seen as a mean for reducing the distance between them.
- The way these issues are experienced is deeply shaped by the different perspective each profession has on the same issue. These issues are experienced with different intensity among the professions.

## Conclusion

- This scoping review opens new insights into commonalities and differences among ethical concerns experienced by physiotherapists, physicians and nurses.
- Given the alarming situation of qualified healthcare professionals, and given the fact that unaddressed moral issues can influence the wish of abandoning the profession, it could be suggested that efforts should focus on finding measures, which aim at addressing these issues possibly on an interdisciplinary level.

## References

- Jameton, A. (1984). *Nursing practice: the ethical issues*. Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall.
- Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement. *PLoS Med* 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097
- Karlsson, M., C. Karlsson, A. Barbosa da Silva, I. Berggren and M. Soderlund (2013). "Community nurses' experiences of ethical problems in end-of-life care in the patient's own home." *Scand J Caring Sci* 27(4): 831-838.
- Karlsson, M., A. Roxberg, A. B. da Silva and I. Berggren (2010). "Community nurses' experiences of ethical dilemmas in palliative care: a Swedish study." *Int J Palliat Nurs* 16(5): 224-231.
- Oberle, K. and S. Tenove (2000). "Ethical issues in public health nursing." *Nurs Ethics* 7(5): 425-438.
- Sturman, N. J., M. Parker and M. L. van Driel (2012). "The informal curriculum - general practitioner perceptions of ethics in clinical practice." *Aust Fam Physician* 41(12): 981-984.
- Delany, C. (2012). "Responding to the moral dimensions of Physical Therapy practice." *Physical Therapy Reviews* 17(3): 141-142.
- Hidely, (Photographer). 2013. *Medical dilemma* (digital image). Retrieved from <http://www.istockphoto.com/cj/vport/fotolia/hidely7mediatypesphotography&sort=best>

