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The Effect of Moral Distress Severity on Training Program Drop-out Tendencies among Adult Nephrology Fellows-in-Training in the Philippines during the Second and Third Quarter of 2024: A Cross-Sectional Study

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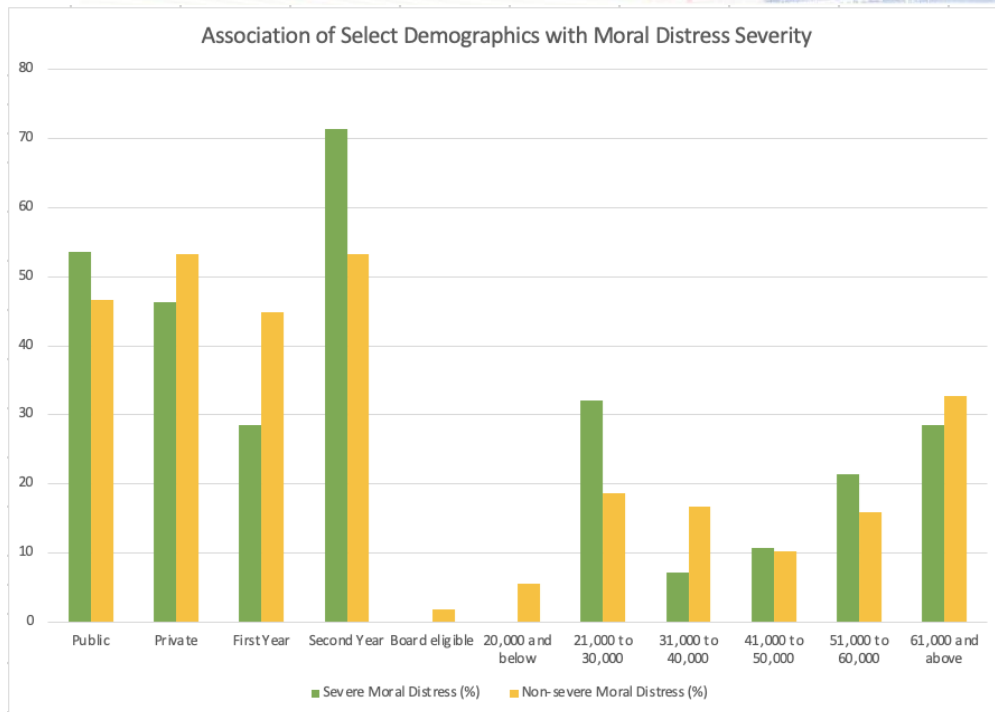
Objectives : This study aims to determine the effect of moral distress severity on training program drop-out tendencies among adult nephrology fellows-in-training in the Philippines.

Methods : This cross-sectional study utilized a validated survey questionnaire (Moral Distress Scale - Revised) to determine the frequency and severity of moral distress among adult nephrology fellows in the Philippines. We sent the survey to all PSN-accredited training institutions throughout the country. Using a 5-point (0–4) scale, fellows rated both the frequency and severity of commonly encountered workplace scenarios. The MDS-R total composite score was calculated and was further categorized into a binary variable using the cut-off 100.

Results : The survey was answered by a total of 135 Adult Nephrology Filipino Fellows-in-training. The domain that had the strongest relationship with moral distress was institutional/fellowship culture, particularly, carrying a high patient census (60% reported to experience it frequently to very frequently while 76.3% answered it to be disturbing to extremely disturbing). Using the cut-off of 100, 107 (79.3%) had at most 100 points or non-severe moral distress, meaning 20.7% can be considered as those with severe moral distress. More than half (53.3%) of the sample reported that "No", they have never considered quitting nor had left any fellowship training program. When asked about their present status, 87.4% reported that they are not considering leaving their position now. Those who consider quitting have a higher proportion of those with severe moral distress as compared to the no drop-out tendency (35.3% vs 18.6%). However, there was no sufficient evidence to ascertain this association ($p=0.098$).

Conclusions : Majority (79.3%) of participants reported non-severe moral distress and suggests that while many cope with the pressures of their roles, a substantial minority (20.7%) experience severe moral distress, indicating a need for intervention, support and retention strategies.

Demographics and Moral Distress.png



Demographics and Moral Distress.png

	Baseline	Crude Odds Ratio			Adjusted Odds Ratio [a]				
		Coef.	95% CI (LL - UL)		Sig.	Coef.	95% CI (LL - UL)		Sig.
Severe Moral Distress (> 100)	MDS-R <= 100	2.38	0.794	7.131	0.121	4.055	15.20	1	0.038
Type of Institution (Private)	Public	2.483	0.823	7.488	0.106	3.184	10.49	3	0.057
Year Level									0.037
Year Level (Second Year)	First Year	0.389	0.132	1.142	0.086	0.27	0.081	0.904	0.034
Total Number of Palliative Care Experiences	N/A	1.097	0.788	1.527	0.585	1.026	0.675	1.558	0.906
Constant						0.082			<.001

a. Outcome: Drop-out tendency or "Are you considering leaving your position now?"
b. Variable(s) entered in the model: Severe Moral Distress (Score > 100), Type of Institution, Year Level, Total Number of Palliative Care Experiences.
c. Demographics were either significant in the bivariate associations or were initially identified in the protocol.