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## Amjed Duwegoda

Ministry of Health, Nutrition and  
Indigenous Medicine, Sri Lanka

### **Moral distress and educational level in medical officers at National Cancer Institute Sri Lanka**

**Background:** Moral distress is emotional stress experienced by health care workers due to ethically conflicting situations while caring for patients. Medical officers providing care for cancer patients at National Cancer Institute Sri Lanka may encounter moral distress. Educational level of the medical officers can influence their moral distress.

**Objectives:** The main objective of this study is to describe the relationship between moral distress and level of education in medical officers working in National Cancer Institute Sri Lanka.

**Method:** A cross sectional survey carried out by a structured self-administered questionnaire using moral distress scale adapted to the study context with the educational level questionnaire. A total of 160 medical officers working in the national cancer institute were included in the study.

**Results:** The survey was completed by 132 medical officers and 77 of them had very mild or no moral distress and 55 of them had mild to moderate moral distress. Among the medical officers had very mild or no moral distress 35.1% of them had post graduate qualifications apart from their basic medical degree while only a 18.2% of medical officers had post graduate qualifications among the very mild or no moral distress group. In the assessment of the association of the level of moral distress with the education level, a statistically significant difference ( $p=0.33$ ) was noted and further it is evident that this difference arises due to the low percentage of (27%) individuals with post graduate qualifications in the mild to moderate moral distress group.

**Conclusion:** A significant association of the level of moral distress with educational level was noted and those with postgraduate qualifications have low levels of moral distress in comparison with those without post graduate qualifications.

### **Biography**

Amjed Duwegoda has obtained his MBBS (CTG), MSc (med Admin), MCGP (SL), DDM (India) has his expertise in evaluation and passion in improving the health and wellbeing of the community and the health care workers. He works as the Medical Superintendent of Base Hospital, Nikaweratiya, Sri Lanka.

Amjedduwegoda@gmail.com

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