

## Effect of nurses' religious beliefs on their empathy and life satisfaction

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### ABSTRACT

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**Introduction:** Nursing is one of those medical professions that are inseparably associated with being in continuous contact with other people, and it is worth noting that there are things that cannot be acquired in the course of an education. These include conscience and empathy as subjective and ultimate standards of morality, which help nurses make morally good decisions and that represent criteria for assessing their behavior.

**Aim:** to assess the effect of nurses' religious beliefs on their empathy and life satisfaction.

**Materials and methods:** the study included 150 nurses and 150 nursing students, using our own questionnaire, the Empathy Understanding Questionnaire (KRE) by Węgliński and The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS).

**Results:** The mean level of KRE-based empathic understanding in the study population was 65.7 points (SD ± 9.4 points), which indicates that it was

relatively high. The lowest observed level was 39, and the highest was 92 points. Mean SWLS score for the study population was about 20 points, which indicates that the studied nurses were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their life. Respondents with the highest level of empathy would discontinue treatment due to their beliefs or they would choose another unspecified solution.

**Conclusions:** The group of nurses showed relatively high levels of empathy and average levels of life satisfaction. No statistically significant correlations were found between the levels of empathy and life satisfaction and the opinion on the role of religious beliefs in the choice of nursing profession, and regarding religion as an obstacle in performing work-related tasks. The importance of nurses' religiousness in making therapeutic decisions did not correspond with life satisfaction nor their level of empathy.

**Keywords:** empathy, SWLS, religion, nurses

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