

PATIENT'S PRIVACY IN THE OPERATING DEPARTMENT

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Privacy is a basic human right and one of the key issues in health care. Safeguarding patient's privacy is legal and ethical duty of a nurse. Realization of patient's privacy is a vital part of high-quality health care: It promotes patient's well-being, affects sense of dignity, and increases satisfaction with care. Privacy as a concept is multidimensional and hard to define. It is cultural, individual, and situational.

Operating department is a special nursing environment with its' own special culture. Patient's possibilities to control his own privacy is limited (in general anesthesia, for example). That's why nurse working in the operating department plays a gatekeeper's role as patient's advocate and privacy protector. Only little attention has been attributed to patient's privacy in the operating department in previous studies.

Increased use of health care technology, patient databases, and use of social media set challenges to patient's privacy. In the end, the most important threat to patient's privacy is a health care professional. Nurses' knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional ethics are in the spotlight when improving better practices and better ethical safety.