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## Ethical obligations of mental health practitioners towards psychiatric patients: A case study analysis

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**Statement of the Problem:** Mental health laws and policies are promulgated to safeguard the needs of psychiatric patients. It is a fundamental human right that psychiatric patients be treated in mental health services that are accessible and acceptable. Mental health care professionals are accountable for protecting the human rights of psychiatric patients. A recent incident in South Africa has appeared to infringe on the basic human rights of the provision of accessible and acceptable mental health services. One hundred psychiatric patients died due to hunger starvation, dehydration and lack of acceptable mental health services and being cared for by skilled mental health practitioners. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the ethical responsibilities of mental health practitioners towards their psychiatric patients.

**Methodology & Theoretical Orientation:** A qualitative, descriptive design with an interpretative approach was utilized. This issue is addressed through document analysis of articles published between 2015 and 2016 in newspapers. In-depth individual interviews will be conducted with mental health care professionals in order to understand their ethical obligations towards psychiatric patients.

**Conclusion & Significance:** Mental health practitioners are bound by their oath taking to speak up when there are violations of human rights. When these rights are violated and they take no action to protect their psychiatric patients, it may seem that their silence is assent. Mental health professionals are not exonerated from being unethical sound towards caring for psychiatric patients in mental health services.

### Biography

Annie M Temane is a Psychiatric Nursing Lecturer for seven years. She has a passion for supervising doctoral and masters' candidates. She serves as a Research Ethics Committees Member and Ministerial Advisory Board Member on Mental Health. She has previously worked in various psychiatric health care settings and projects related to mental health. Her current interests are ethics and supervision and facilitating mental health of individual, groups and families.

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