

## Same Principles, Different Worlds: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Medical Ethics and Nursing Ethics in Finnish Professional Texts

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**Abstract** This qualitative social scientific study explores professional texts of healthcare ethics to understand the ways in which ethical professionalism in medicine and nursing are culturally constructed in Finland. Two books in ethics, published by Finnish national professional organizations—one for nurses and one for physicians—were analyzed with the method of critical discourse analysis. Codes of ethics for each profession were also scrutinized. Analysis of the texts sought to reveal what is taken for granted in the texts as well as to speculate what appeared to be relegated to the margins of the texts or left entirely invisible. Physicians' ethics was discovered to emphasize *objectivity* and *strong group membership* as a basis for ethical professionalism. The discourses identified in the physicians' ethics guidebook were *universal ethics*, *reductionism*, *non-subjectivity*, and *threat*. Nursing ethics was discovered to highlight *reflectivity* as its central focus. This idea of reflectivity was echoed in the identified discourses: *local ethics*, *enlightenment*, and *moral agency*. The analysis exposes a cultural gap between the ethics discourses of medicine and nursing. More work is needed to bridge ethics discourses in Finland in a way that can support healthcare professionals to find common ground and to foster inclusivity in ethical dialogue. Further development of bioethical practices is suggested as a potential way forward.

**Keywords** Professional ethics · Bioethics · Medical ethics · Nursing ethics · Qualitative research · Critical discourse analysis

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