Results Patient rights have been included in the research findings as a main issue in intensive care units among other important issues, such as decision-making, privacy and end of life care. Health care professionals must understand patients’ and families’ wishes and increase the communication in the intensive care units in order to provide patient autonomy and privacy.

Discussion It was evident from the literature review that critically ill patients cannot actively participate in decisions about their health and treatment, but the health care professionals and families must respect them as human beings. Patient rights are fundamental for all the people in the hospitals.

Conclusion Further research is needed to determine the extent to which patients’ rights are respected in intensive care units and in addition to examine the knowledge and attitudes of health care professionals and relatives regarding patients’ rights of critically ill patients.