A QUALITATIVE META-SYNTHESIS OF CARING LEADERSHIP
RECLAIMING HUMANISTIC CARING IN NURSING LEADERSHIP
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IDENTIFIED GAP & STUDY AIMS
- Caring leadership literature is limited mostly to studies in education and organizational psychology.
- Caring leadership literature in nursing is for the most part conceptual in nature and not fully grounded in empirical evidence.
- The aim of this review is twofold:
  - Aim #1: To synthesize available qualitative literature on caring leadership to explore and describe the main elements/aspects that contribute to caring leadership
  - Aim #2: To identify implications for nursing leadership education, practice, and research

METHOD & PROCESS
- A systematic and concrete process to synthesize these studies and identify overarching themes.
- The method chosen was Nobil and Hare’s meta ethnography approach.
- The seven phases are designed to help the researcher to systematically review and synthesize the findings of qualitative studies that examine caring leadership.
  1. Getting started
  2. Defining what is relevant to the initial interest
  3. Reading the studies
  4. Determining how the studies are related
  5. Translating the studies into one another
  6. Synthesizing translations
  7. Expressing the synthesis

METHODS & PROCESS
- Twelve (12) eligible qualitative studies included comprising results from 118 unique participants representing caring leadership in different leadership contexts, such as nursing (n=3), elementary (n=1) and higher education (n=7), and public service (n=1).
- Five (5) of the qualitative studies were from the United States and Finland, four (4) from the United States only, and one each from mainland China, the United Kingdom, and the Philippines.
- Data study identified individual or focus group interviews, ethnographic observations, questionnaires, and artifact collection.
- Six (6) studies were qualitative descriptive, three (3) qualitative interpretative, one (1) qualitative exploratory, and two (2) case studies.

FINDINGS
- Data revealed five overarching themes: caring leadership as embodied (a way of being), situational, relational, action-driven practices and interventions (a way of doing), and enabling human flourishing.
- Results demonstrated caring leadership takes place at every level and had positive effects for leaders (self), followers and organizations.
- Caring leaders found meaning in their work by engaging in self-leadership and loved-based actions, leading the way, developing and empowering followers and demonstrating a commitment to an organizational caring culture. As a result, staff felt valued, supported and cared for, positively influencing job enjoyment, satisfaction and retention.
- In keeping with the nature of a process, the outcomes of caring leadership come to influence the organization and work environment.

CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE DIRECTION
- Caring leadership is a critical component of establishing an organization’s culture and creating a caring environment.
- Caring leadership practices within complex bureaucratic health care systems.
- Findings of meta-synthesis have important implications and recommendations for further nursing personal development, leadership, education, practice and future research in a caring science theory based perspective.

REFERENCES