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# The Lived Experience of Critically III Patients in Isolation Rooms: Surviving Isolation Sondos B. Eqylan, RN, MSN and Reema R. Safadi, RN, LCCE, PhD, Professor The University of Jordan, School of Nursing

# INTRODUCTION

#### Background

- Infectious diseases have dramatically increased in prevalence over the last few years in critically ill patients that entail applying isolation instructions based on policies and guidelines.
- Critically ill patients under isolation precautions are subject to care management that may (3) Distressed by healthcare providers' attitudes and behaviors differ from other patients in general Intensive Care Units (ICUs) or other hospital floors, and thus exposed to different experiences when hospitalized.
- Several studies have revealed the negative psychological impact of isolation on patients' behavior during their stay in isolation rooms.
- Studies focusing on the meaning of critically ill patients' experiences in isolation rooms, their concerns and needs are lacking in the Arabic Muslim context.

## OBJECTIVES

The purposes of this study were to explore critically ill patients' experiences and perceptions related to staying in isolation rooms under isolation precautions, and to understand their feelings of concern, fears, and needs in the Arabic Muslim context.

# METHODOLOGY

### Design

A descriptive phenomenological inquiry, involving semi-structured in-depth interviews.

## Sample and Setting

Purposive sampling of ten critically ill patients who were admitted to the ICU isolation rooms in one private hospital in Amman.

#### Data collection

Ten face-to-face interviews were conducted within 24-hours of discharge from the isolation settings; audio-recorded and transcribed.

## Data analysis

Colaizzis's method (1978) seven steps framework was used for analyzing data.

#### FINDINGS

- The overall experiences of isolation were viewed as negative.
- The findings show five main themes:
- (1) The alienation of isolation
- (2) Deprived of patient's rights
- (4) Accepting isolation with its adversity
- (5) Learning lessons from isolation experience.
- Critically ill patients' perceptions, intense feelings, needs and concerns of isolation experiences were pointed out into four major domains of lifeworld existentials, that are (1) lived relation, (2) lived body, (3) lived space, and (4) lived time.
- The essence of these isolation experiences was "surviving isolation".

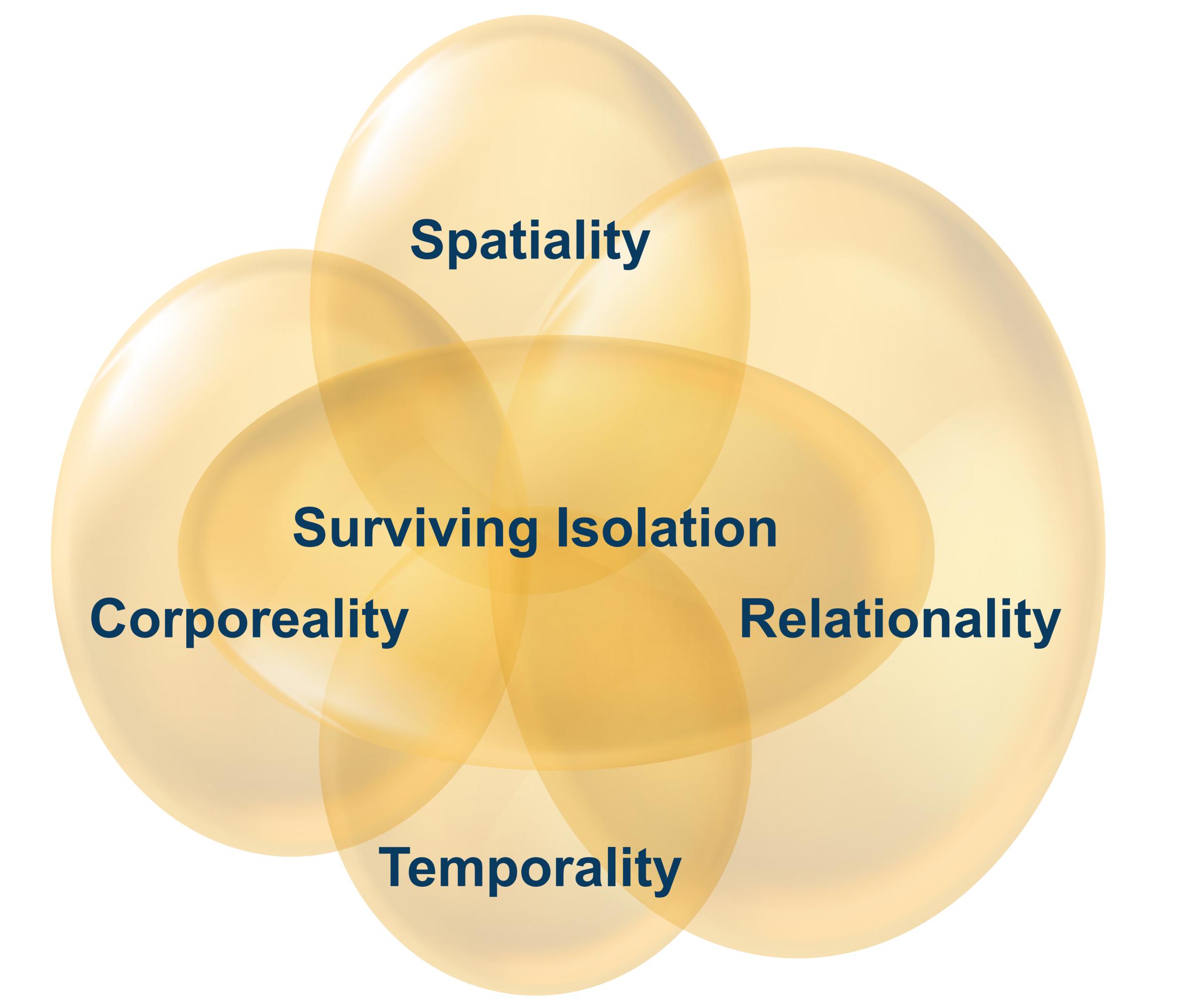


Figure. Four Lifeworld Existentials

# IMPLICATIONS

- Developing effective healthcare policies regarding nursing care in isolation settings.
- Applying a multidisciplinary team approach for the provision of holistic care for critically ill patients in isolation settings.
- Conducting educational programs for healthcare providers that encompass materials regarding understanding patients' psychological, emotional and spiritual needs besides their physical needs.

# CONCLUSIONS

- This phenomenological study addressed what appears to be a "blind spot" in knowledge and understanding of isolation experience from critically ill patients' perspectives.
- The findings revealed deficiencies of healthcare providers' skills and competencies in the management of critically ill patients with contagious diseases.
- Awareness of these findings, and adequate healthcare providers understanding of patients' physical, social, and psychological/spiritual needs and support are needed to help patients cope with the adversity of isolation.

#### SOME RELEVANT REFERENCES

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