

Theme

1 - Clinical practice

Vitor Parola vitorparola@esenfc.pt

Adriana Coelho adriananevescoelho@esenfc.pt

Olga Fernandes olgafernandes@esenf.pt

João Luís Alves Apóstolo apostolo@esenfc.pt

Title: Nurses' Lived Experiences of Caring in Palliative Care - A Phenomenological Study

Introduction With the increase of people in need of Palliative Care, more and more nurses experience caring for the person in this context, which is a professional/personal challenge with implications that deserve to be analyzed. Providing palliative care involves serious challenges for nurses, such as end-of-life decisions, contact with people's suffering/dying, and increased risk of burnout. However, studies have revealed that burnout level of health professionals working in palliative care is lower than that of professionals working in other settings.

Objectives This study aimed to describe the lived experiences of nurses caring in a palliative care unit.

Methodology A descriptive phenomenological study was undertaken. Nine nurses were recruited from a palliative care unit. Data were collected using individual interviews and analyzed following the method of Giorgi. This study was approved by the Ethics Committee (reference no. P371-11/2016) and the Ethics Committee of the Hospital before commencement. This study also conforms to the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research guidelines.

Results Five themes reflect the essence of the lived experience: (1)experience centered on the relationship with the other (i.e, with each patient, a singular relationship is established. With the family, not only a partner relationship but also a supportive relationship), (2)experience centered on the relationship with one's own self (emerging the confrontation with one's own mortality and the awakening to change), (3)exhausting experience (through attempts at distancing or by the feeling of impotence), (4)rewarding experience (by recognition and the feeling of usefulness), and (5)the team as a pillar (by providing shared feelings, opinions, doubts, and relaxing moments).

Conclusions Findings can be valuable for understanding the challenges/strategies experienced by nurses caring in palliative care and for designing interventions emphasis on reducing the risk of burnout between nurses - not only those working in palliative care but also those working in other contexts who experience regular contact with suffering/death.

Keyword 1
end-of-life care

Keyword 2
palliative care

Keyword 3

phenomenology

Keyword 4
qualitative research

Keyword 5
professional burnout

Keyword 6
nurses

References

- Pavelková, H., & Bužgová, R. (2015). Burnout among healthcare workers in hospice care. *Central European Journal of Nursing and Midwifery*, 6(1), 218–223. <https://doi.org/10.15452/CEJNM.2015.0>
- Parola, V., Coelho, A., Cardoso, D., Sandgren, A., & Apostolo, J. (2017). Prevalence of burnout in health professionals working in palliative care: a systematic review. *JBI Database of Systematic Reviews and Implementation Reports*, 15(7), 1905–1933. <https://doi.org/10.11124/JBISRIR-2016-003309>
- Parola, V., Coelho, A., Cardoso, D., Sandgren, A., & Apóstolo, J. (2017). Burnout in palliative care settings compared to other settings: a systematic review. *The Journal of Hospice and Palliative Nursing*, 19(5), 442–451. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NJH.0000000000000370>
- Parola, V., Coelho, A., Sandgren, A., Fernandes, O., & Apóstolo, J. (2018). Caring in Palliative Care—a phenomenological study of nurses' lived experiences. *Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing*, 20(2), 180–186. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NJH.0000000000000428>
- 6.0006