



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

Vitor Sérgio de Oliveira Parola

Vitor Parola, RN, PhD^{1,2,3}

Adriana Coelho, RN, PhD^{2,3,4}

Olga Fernandes, RN, PhD⁵

João Apóstolo, RN, PhD^{2,3,4}

1- University Fernando Pessoa, Faculty of Health Sciences, Porto, Portugal.

2 -Associate Research at the Portugal Centre for Evidence-Based Practice: A JBI Centre of Excellence - UICISA: E.

3 - Sigma's membership - Capítulo Phi Xi- Sigma Theta Tau International.

4 - Nursing School of Coimbra, Portugal.

5 - Nursing School of Porto, Portugal.

Coimbra, Maio, 2020

BACKGROUND

- The increased number of people living with a chronic degenerative and disabling disease contributed to a growing need for Palliative Care.
- More nurses will provide this singular care.
- Caring in Palliative Care causes intense emotions which could lead to multiple stressful and demanding challenges for nurses.
- These challenges can cause physical, psychological and emotional distress as well as work-related stress, and if not treated in time, there is a risk of burnout.

BACKGROUND

- Working with dying patients is considered to pose an even higher risk of burnout than working in other areas of health care.
- On the other hand, there is also empirical evidence of greater professional satisfaction in professionals working in this field compared to those working in other contexts.
- This ambiguity demonstrates that nursing practice in Palliative Care is a complex endeavor and that more evidence is needed about caring in Palliative Care.

AIMS

1. To understand the experiences of nurses who provide care in a Palliative Care Unit.

STUDY DESIGN

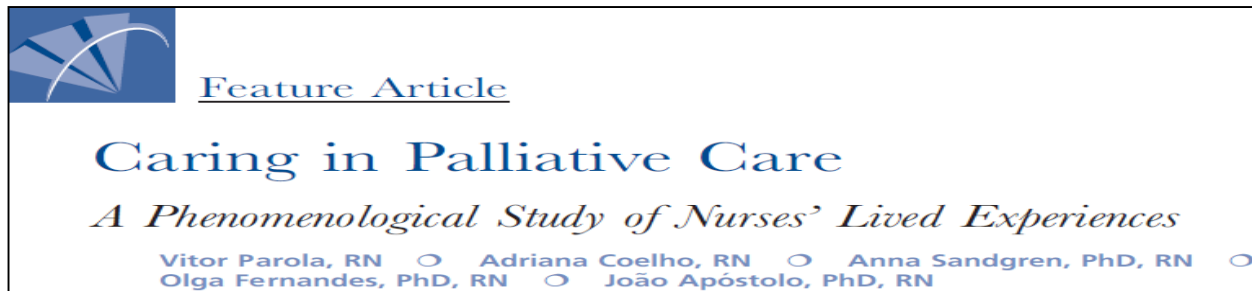
Understanding the phenomenon

- Qualitative Study of
Phenomenological
Approach

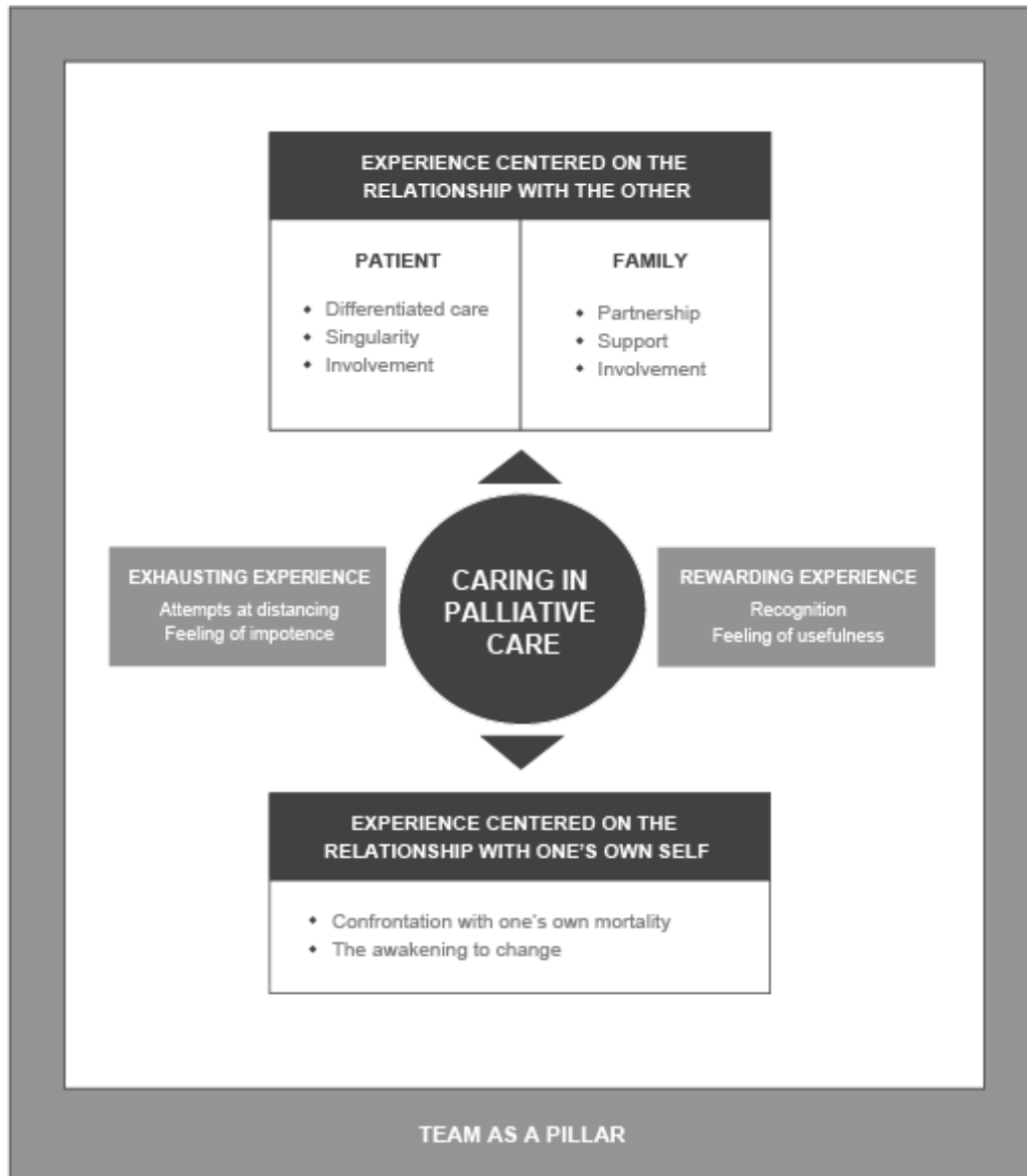
UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

Phenomenological qualitative study

- To understand the experiences of nurses who provide care in a Palliative Care Unit.



UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON



Context

- Palliative Care Unit (Hospital Arcebispo João Crisóstomo – Cantanhede)

Sample

- 9 nurses

Data Collection

- Nonstructured interviews

Data analysis

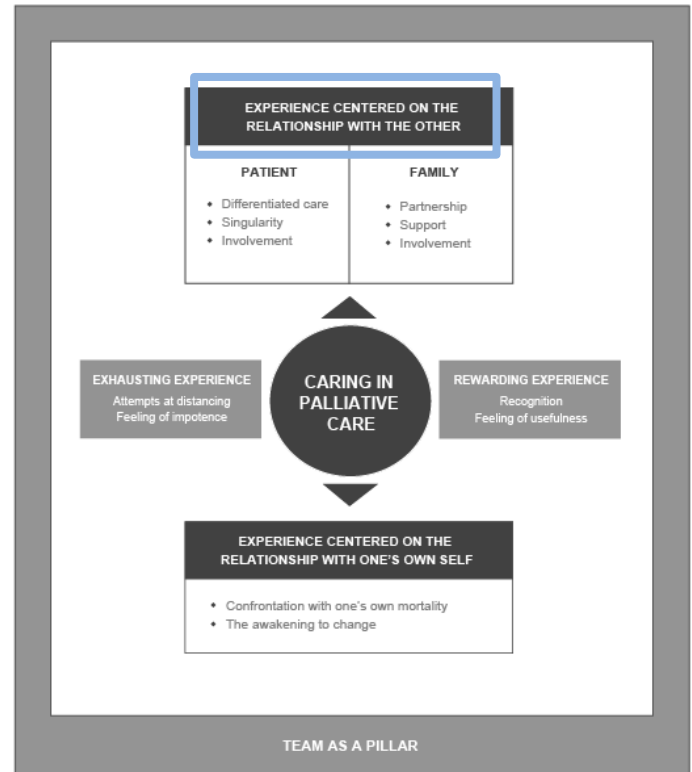
- According to Giorgi's

Ethics Committee

- Health Sciences Research Unit: Nursing
- Hospital Arcebispo João Crisóstomo

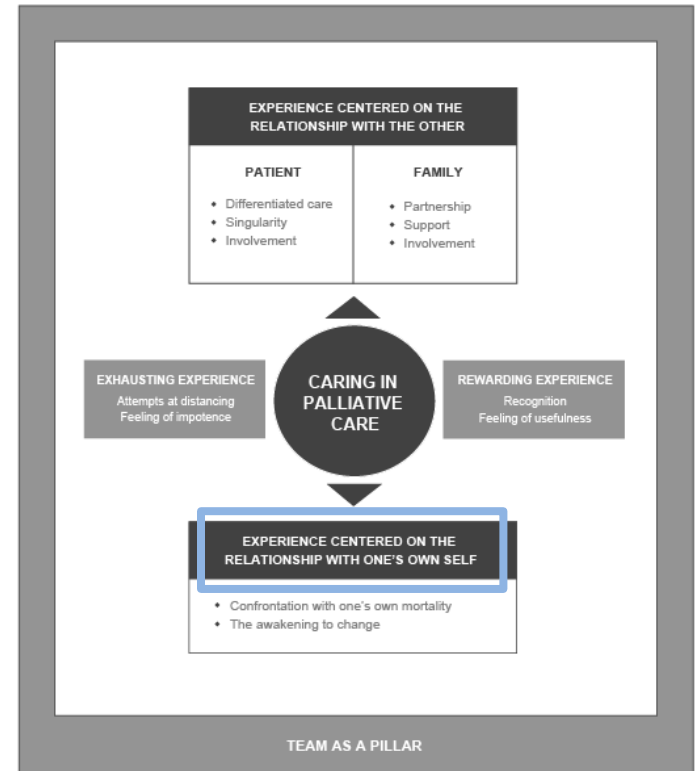
UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

- Nurses' caring in Palliative Care favour living an experience centered not only in a relationship with the other, the recipient of the nurse's care.



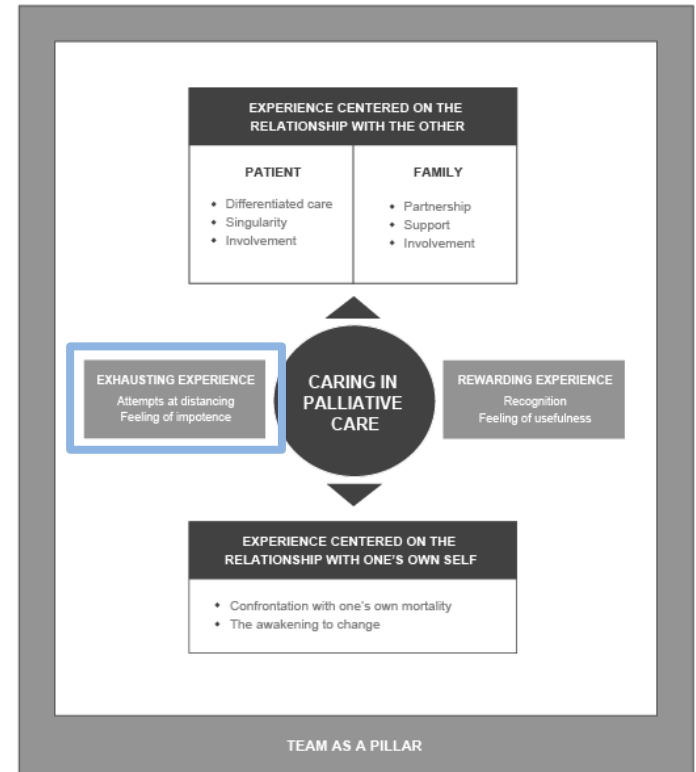
UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

- Nurses' caring in Palliative Care favour living an experience centered not only in a relationship with the other, the recipient of the nurse's care.
- Also in a relation with oneself, opening space for personal development.



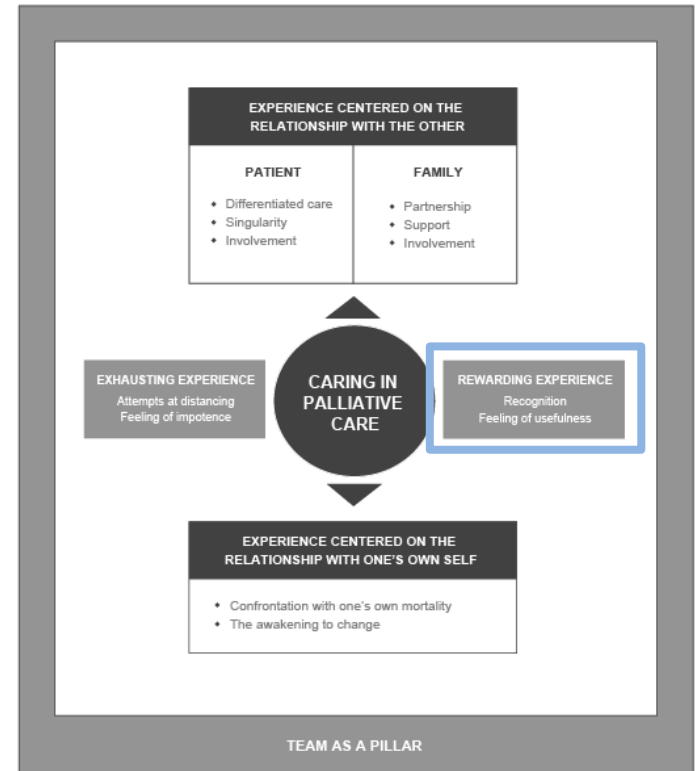
UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

- Nurses' caring in Palliative Care favour living an experience centered not only in a relationship with the other, the recipient of the nurse's care.
- Also in a relation with oneself, opening space for personal development.
- On the one hand, it is an exhausting experience because of the nurses' frustrated attempts to distance themselves and because of their feeling of powerlessness in light of the suffering of the other.



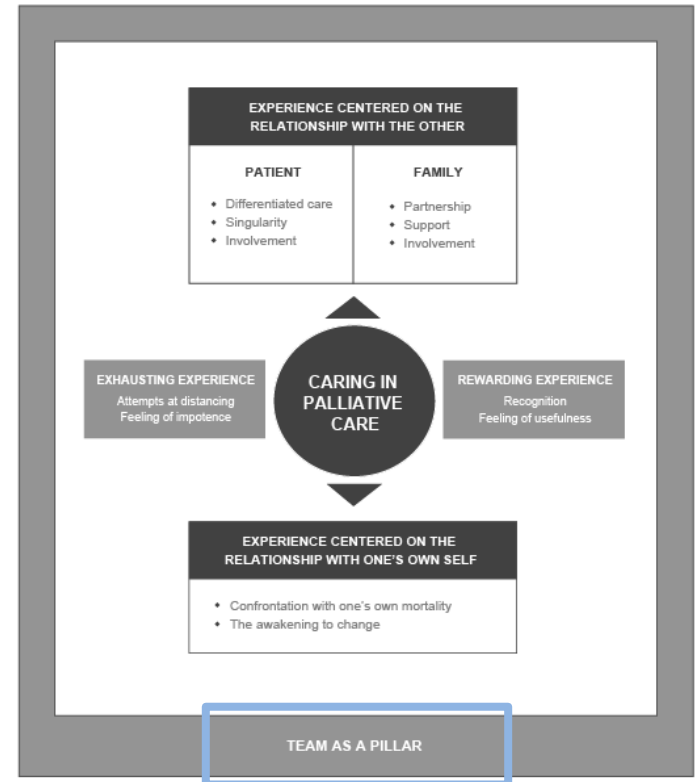
UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

- Nurses' caring in Palliative Care favour living an experience centered not only in a relationship with the other, the recipient of the nurse's care.
- Also in a relation with oneself, opening space for personal development.
- On the one hand, it is an exhausting experience because of the nurses' frustrated attempts to distance themselves and because of their feeling of powerlessness in light of the suffering of the other.
- On the other hand, the enriching experience is mediated by the recognition received from the other and by feeling useful.



UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

- Nurses' caring in Palliative Care favour living an experience centered not only in a relationship with the other, the recipient of the nurse's care.
- Also in a relation with oneself, opening space for personal development.
- On the one hand, it is an exhausting experience because of the nurses' frustrated attempts to distance themselves and because of their feeling of powerlessness in light of the suffering of the other.



- On the other hand, the enriching experience is mediated by the recognition received from the other and by feeling useful.
- The team represents the pillar of all the experience, where there is a relationship of not only sharing concerns and doubts but also good moments inside and outside the service.

UNDERSTANDING THE PHENOMENON

- In the future, more and more nurses will come in contact with the suffering and death of patients in various contexts.
- Documenting these experiences was crucial, since it asks nurses, researchers and managers in the area of Palliative Care and others, to reflect on the challenges experienced by these nurses, their strategies of self-care, and the team as a pillar that supports the (demanding) experiences.
- Future research should focus on nurses' experiences in a palliative home care context and should design interventions that focus on reducing the exhausting experience among nurses in Palliative Care, as well as in other contexts where nurses have regular contact with suffering and death.
- Provide visibility to the experiences of the nurses caring in Palliative Care and provided valuable contributions for designing interventions that focus on reducing the risk of burnout among nurses.

WHAT DOES THIS STUDY ADD?

Revealed that five themes reflect the essence of the lived experience by nurses caring in Palliative Care: (1) experience centered on the relationship with the Other; (2) experience centered on the relationship with one's own self; (3) exhausting experience; (4) rewarding experience; and (5) the team as a pillar.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE, THEORY OR POLICY

Provided visibility to the experiences of the nurses caring in Palliative Care and provided valuable contributions for designing interventions that focus on reducing the risk of burnout among nurses — not only those working in Palliative Care but also those working in other contexts who experience regular contact with suffering and death.