The Lived Experience of the Hospice Care Nurse as Primary Provider of End-of-Life Care

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Purpose: The purpose of this research was to discover the essence and meaning of the lived experience of the hospice care nurse as primary provider of end-of-life care. Prior to this research, little was known about the hospice care nurses in the United States.

Methods: This qualitative research was underpinned by constructivism and the philosophy of Husserl known as descriptive phenomenology. Moustakas’ (1994) method was used to discover the lived experiences of 12 hospice care nurses who have at least 2 years of experience as the primary provider of end-of-life care. The semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim to capture the true essence and meaning of the hospice nurses experience providing care to patients and families daily.

Results: The four strong themes that emerged from this research are Feeling Attachment, Managing Workload, Lacking Support, and Providing Education. These themes clearly describe the essence and meaning of the lived experience of the hospice care nurses.

Conclusion: To this researcher’s knowledge, this is the first qualitative research about the lived experience of the hospice care nurse as primary provider of end-of-life care in the United States. The demand for productivity has stretched the hospice nurses to the brink of exhaustion. All of the hospice care nurses expressed the need for individual counseling and support. It is my hope that this research will draw attention to the dynamics surrounding hospice nursing and the educational needs of health care providers and the general population. A gap in research was revealed about hospice care nurses in the United States. Investigation and identification of interventions that support hospice care nurses coping with death and dying on a daily basis is essential. In addition, research to understand diverse patient cultures and develop culturally competent information is needed to break down the barriers to hospice education. To improve patient care, the myths about death, dying, and medication need to be demystified through education at the community level. Research into the reluctance and resistance of physicians toward hospice is necessary to promote early referrals and quality end-of-life care. Hospice care nurses are needed locally and globally, and the dissemination of this study could influence funding resources for future research. This research may add to the body of nursing knowledge, improve working conditions for hospice nurses, and impact quality patient care.

Title:
The Lived Experience of the Hospice Care Nurse as Primary Provider of End-of-Life Care
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Abstract Summary:
This is the first qualitative research about the lived experience of the hospice care nurse as primary provider of end-of-life care in the United States. The hospice nurse plays a pivotal role in the growing hospice industry and little is known about these nurses.

References:

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Author Summary: Dr. Reinhart has been a nurse for over twenty-two years. She has a diversified background from pediatrics to hospice care and nursing management. Dr. Reinhart was a nurse manager in hospice for 15 years. This presentation is about the research conducted regarding the experiences of hospice nurses. It was conducted for her doctoral degree in May 2016.