Elucidation of tacit knowledge that supports the practice of an expert nurse based on the RAM

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Research background and purpose

Tacit knowledge is defined as "we can know more than we can tell (Polanyi,1966)". Authors have continued research by using observation and reflection techniques to explore tacit knowledge that underpins the nursing practices of an expert nurse. However, in the process of exploring that knowledge, there can be a problem that the interpretation of the observer and the intention of the expert nurse may be different, and there are difficulties in expressing that knowledge in the language. Therefore, in this study, we report the introduction of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach that explores how nurses think deeply in their wolrd of living experiences. This study aims to elucidate tacit knowledge that underpins the nursing practice of the expert nurse.

Research methods

1. Method: Qualitative descriptive research (hermeneutic phenomenological approach).

2. Participant: One expert nurse who implements the RAM and practices advanced nursing.

3. Data collection and methods: April 2021 to January 2022. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. A researcher asked questions such as the following: "What was your most impressive nursing practice experience?," "What meaning and value did your experiences have for you?." Interviews were conducted three times (a total of 4 hours) in a private room. Data were analyzed based on a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

4. Ethical considerations: This study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee, Okayama University Graduate School of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and Okayama University Hospital (Lab 2104-029).

Results   The expert nurse talked about her experience based on six model cases. From the analysis, typical examples were extracted, such as "the attitude of believing in the power of a vulnerable human being," "the concept of temporality," "respect for human dignity," "preparation to respond to patients' suffering and carrying on together " and "theoretical knowledge based on the approach of true understanding of the patients' lived experience."

Considerations and conclusion

These results show that deeply interpreting "humanism" and "veritivity," which are the philosophical assumptions, and deeply implementing the RAM can be considered to be essential constructions of tacit knowledge of the expert nurse's practice.