

Lived Experience of Emergency Service Personnel in Pediatric Resuscitation and Unexpected Death: A Phenomenological Study

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Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this study was to understand the experience of health care professionals who have experienced an unexpected pediatric death after an unsuccessful resuscitation in an emergency care setting.

Significance

- There are over 63,000 pediatric deaths a year. (CDC, 2016)
- Of these, ¼ occur in hospital settings.
- Approximately 20% occur in outpatient settings.
- Over 5900 were out of hospital cardiac arrests under the age of 18.
- Almost 7000 were attributed to accidental causes including homicide and suicide.
- There is a cost to caring. (Figley 1995)

Review of the Literature

Lack of education and training in pediatric end-of-life and palliative care education.
Lack of communication skills with both the interdisciplinary team and the family in conveying bad news.
Lack of information on how health care providers cope with the loss of a child, especially when the death is unexpected.

Methodology

- Qualitative Hermeneutic Phenomenology guided by van Manen. (1990)
- Informed consent followed by open-ended semi structured interviews that were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim.
- Rigor guided by Madison. (1988)

Research Question

What is the lived experience of emergency service personnel who experience the unexpected pediatric death after an unsuccessful resuscitative effort?

Study Participants

Eight emergency service personnel were interviewed for this study.

Name	Education	Ethnicity	Age
Elizabeth	RN, ASN	Caucasian	40
Michelle	Physician	Indian	32
Sally	RN, BSN	Caucasian	30
Avaril	Physician	Indian	39
Sarah	RN, ASN	Caucasian	29
Larry	Respiratory Therapist	Middle Eastern	36
Vanessa	Physician	Asian	36
David	Physician	Hispanic	35

Existential Themes and Subthemes

Existential Themes	Subthemes
Lived Time	What if? Dying before my eyes
Lived Other	Team What if it were my child/being a parent
Lived Time	The environment Being trapped
Lived Body	Wounded Healer Education Anger Failure Coping

Conclusions and Recommendations

From this study, health care professionals experience a sense of failure, anger and not being emotionally prepared to cope with an unexpected pediatric death.

Implications for education and practice include more pediatric end-of-life training including education on communication not only with the family, but with in team, relaying "bad news", encourage debriefing and more follow up-group or individual, and encouraging self-care.



It is such a secret place; the land of tears.
Antoine De Saint-Exupery

References available on request.