

A Qualitative Exploration of the Perceptions of Caring for Families of Dying Patients in Undergraduate Nursing Students

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Statement of the Problem

- Since nurses spend the most time with dying patients and their families.^{2, 8}
- Nurses should be competent in caring for the families as well as the dying patients.
- Research on care of the family of dying patients has been limited in scope.
- Effective nursing care can assist with peaceful deaths and support to families.¹

Background

- One of the most stressful encounters nursing students face is death.⁴
- Many nurses do not feel prepared to care for patients and families at the end of life.^{3,6,7}
- After death, nurses must still care for the patients' significant others during this time of sorrow and stress.
- Many nursing schools have adopted a course or module to teach palliative and end-of-life care. The ELNEC course is prominent.
- Still, the literature shows that many nurses are not well-prepared for end-of-life care.

Gaps

- Lack of preparation for nurses in caring for end-of-life patients and families.
- Communication among caregivers and between patients and their families is vital in order to provide quality care that fits with the values and beliefs of the patient and family.
- Feeling prepared for caring for end-of-life families relates to the level of knowledge as well as the comfort level of the nurse during the end-of-life experience.



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Research Questions

- RQ1: What is needed by nursing students to become providers of good care to families, friends, or significant others of dying patients?
- RQ2: What do nursing students perceive as challenges and facilitators of providing care for families, friends, or significant others of dying patients?



Method

- Qualitative, case study method
- Setting: A small, private college in the Midwest. Senior undergraduate nursing students.
- Group interviews with senior nursing
- Interviews will be taped and transcribed verbatim.
- After interviews transcribed, the information will be stored, sorted, and analyzed using a program such as Dedoose.
- Thematic analysis will be performed.

Research Team

- Kristin Haglund - Dissertation chair
- Susan Breakwell – Committee member

Bibliography

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