

Describing Perceptions and Experiences of Undergraduate Nursing Students Regarding Death and Dying in Palliative Care Setting

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Abstract

Background: Nurses in palliative care settings go through a wide range of experiences, therefore, they are able to provide an insight into death and dying related experiences explicitly.

Objective: This study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of nurses about providing palliative care to patients and their family members.

Method: A descriptive study design was used. The study was approved by the university ethics committee and the informed signed consent was obtained from the participants. Participants enrolled in the study (n=41) were divided into six groups for focus group discussion generated through using an interview guide. These discussions were recorded, transcribed and analyzed in themes, sub-themes and categories.

Findings: The study findings highlighted the following main themes: the attitude of nurses, ethical dilemmas and

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A descriptive research design was used to explore the perceptions and experiences of participants who were the undergraduate nursing students (n=41), caring for patients with death and dying in the palliative course in post RN BScN program. program enrolls nurses with a minimum of two years of experience. they complete three years of diploma in nursing and one year of diploma in specialization in any course was from Jan 2018-April 2018 the current study was conducted almost 3 months exposure of theory, simulation and clinical. During the course

participants shared that in their daily routine they are more

participants in all the FGDs talked about lack of training as one of the ethical dilemma which obstructs them to provide holistic palliative care to their patients and families

The theme of readiness is further divided into two following subthemes as follows:

Category 1: Lack of training

Participant shared that few nurses are not ready to handle patients in palliative care because of lack of training and lack of competence.

Category 1: Lack of training

Participants shared that they are not well trained in terms of palliative training. One participant shared:

“Chronic illnesses like cancer are prevailing and there is a need for people to deal with it. Without training we won't be able to provide them with the kind of comfort which they deserve” (FGD 6).

Another participant shared:

“I was in a course to make us more prepared to deal with end of life patients and we haven't had a course in palliative care before this” (FGD 2)

Category 2: Lack of competence

Participants shared that they lack the competency to care for their dying patients and their families. One participant described, “When I handled a dying situation for the first time that was scary because the caring of a dying patient is very challenging” (FGD 2). Another participant shared:

“We are helpless. I mean we do not have that much skill [to give them comfort]”. (FGD 1).

Category 3: Lack of family readiness

In the theme of family readiness participants' narratives are following:

Category 1: Lack of comprehension

Participants shared that in our context family members are not well prepared to understand the patient's condition including the medical jargons and treatment choices.

One participant shared:

“I was with two brothers of the patient, they had signed DNR but they did not know what was meant by DNR” (FGD 2).

In this context one participant shared:

“Because we were informed beforehand that patient is DNR code.

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Providing quality palliative care to dying patients is important for nurses