

15th Euro Nursing & Medicare Summit

October 17-19, 2016 Rome, Italy

Foresight and awareness of incipient changes in a patient's clinical conditions Perspectives of intensive care nurses”.

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Objectives: The aim of this study was to explore the phenomenon of becoming aware of incipient changes in patient condition from the perspectives and experiences of intensive care nurses.

Research Methodology: This study involved close observations of and in-depth interviews with 11 experienced intensive care nurses. The text was analyzed using a hermeneutic phenomenological method that was inspired by van Manen.

Setting: This study was undertaken at two different high-technology intensive care units (ICUs) in Norwegian university hospitals.

Results: Nurses formed images of individual patients composed of signs (of changes in a patient's condition) that were sensory, measurable, and manifested as the mood of the nurse. The signs may be viewed as separate from and opposed to one another, but they are tightly interwoven and interact with one another. Care situations are powerful stimuli for the patient, and it is of great importance for nurses to become aware of signs in these situations. Nurses also ascribe that following the patient over time is important for becoming aware of signs.

Conclusion: An awareness of incipient changes in patient clinical condition requires understanding the ever-changing dynamics of patient condition and dialogic images composed of signs. Care situations and the following of patients through shifts are essential in enabling nurses to detect these signs.

Biography

Monica Kvande, RN, MSc, ICN, PhD student. Her research interest is in intensive care nurses' clinical competence. She is currently working on her PhD project, which investigates the experiences of intensive care nurses of becoming aware of changes in patient conditions and of how changes are communicated in the ICU team

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