

Exploring the Experiences of Nurses Providing End-of-Life Care: A Qualitative Study

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Introduction

End-of-life care is a critical aspect of nursing practice, involving the provision of holistic care to patients and their families during the end stages of life. The aim of this qualitative study is to explore the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 nurses working in an acute care hospital in the United States. The inclusion criteria were registered nurses with experience in providing end-of-life care. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data [1].

Description

The thematic analysis revealed four main themes related to the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care: (1) emotional impact, communication challenges, ethical dilemmas and need for support. The nurses reported that providing end-of-life care was emotionally challenging. They described feeling sadness, grief, and stress when caring for dying patients. The nurses also reported feeling a sense of responsibility to ensure that patients received high-quality care during their final days. The nurses reported that communication with patients and their families was a significant challenge when providing end-of-life care [2]. They described difficulties in communicating effectively about end-of-life issues, such as the prognosis and treatment options. The nurses also reported that communication breakdowns with other healthcare professionals could lead to suboptimal patient care [3].

The nurses reported encountering ethical dilemmas when providing end-of-life care. They described situations where patients or their families had conflicting values or beliefs about end-of-life care. The nurses also reported feeling torn between respecting the autonomy of the patient and the wishes of the family. The nurses identified the need for support when providing end-of-life care. They reported that support from colleagues, families, and supervisors was essential in helping them cope with the emotional and ethical challenges of providing end-of-life care. The findings of this qualitative study highlight the emotional, communication, ethical, and support challenges that nurses face when providing end-of-life care. The study emphasizes the importance of providing support to nurses and promoting effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients/families to ensure high-quality end-of-life care.

The findings of this study have several implications for nursing practice. First, healthcare organizations should provide training and support to nurses to help them cope with the emotional challenges of providing end-of-life care. Second, healthcare organizations should promote effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients/families to ensure that end-of-life care is patient-centered and meets the needs and wishes of the patient and their family. Third, healthcare organizations should provide ethical guidance and

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support to nurses when they encounter ethical dilemmas in end-of-life care. Future research should explore the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care in different healthcare settings, such as hospices and long-term care facilities. Additionally, future research should investigate the effectiveness of different interventions, such as communication training and support programs, in improving the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care. Finally, future research should explore the experiences of patients and their families receiving end-of-life care to gain a better understanding of their perspectives and needs [4].

One limitation of this study is the small sample size. The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other nurses providing end-of-life care. Additionally, this study was conducted in a single acute care hospital in the United States, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other healthcare settings and countries. Another limitation is the potential for social desirability bias. Nurses may have provided socially desirable responses during the interviews, which may have influenced the results of the study. Additionally, the study did not explore the experiences of nurses from different cultural backgrounds, which may influence their experiences of providing end-of-life care [5].

Conclusion

This qualitative study provides insights into the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care. The study highlights the emotional, communication, ethical, and support challenges that nurses face when providing end-of-life care. The findings of this study have several implications for nursing practice, including the importance of providing support to nurses and promoting effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients/families. Future research should explore the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care in different healthcare settings and investigate the effectiveness of different interventions in improving the experiences of nurses providing end-of-life care.

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Conflict of Interest

None.

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