

Short Communication

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY TO ASSESS THE PERCEPTION ON DEATH AND DYING AMONG NURSING STUDENTS IN SELECTED COLLEGES OF NURSING IN UDUPI DISTRICT, KARNATAKA STATE

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Abstract :

Objective: The objectives of the study were assess nursing students perception on death and dying and to identify the perception on death and dying among nursing students of different levels.

Materials and Methods: A descriptive survey design was used. Data were collected from 210 nursing students in selected Colleges of Nursing in Udupi district, Karnataka state by using semi structured questionnaire.

Result: Thoughts: while caring dying patients and their families, 66.6% perceived thoughts regarding the physical, emotional, spiritual care given to patients who were dying and 77.6% regarding their family or friends. 57.1% perceived thoughts regarding their sufferings, 88% perceived thoughts about a realization that death is a part of life, 29.5% perceived thoughts about the survival and 42.8% perceived that being able to care for dying patients as a privilege and it is an opportunity to work with those who are going through the dying process.

Feelings: 40.5% nursing students had physiological symptoms like nausea, muscle tension, headache , 53.8% had fear, 68.5% developed compassion, 86.6% had sadness and 46.2% developed anxiety while caring for dying patients and their families.

Challenges: 67.1% of nursing students unaware about how to communicate with unresponsive patient, 61.9% expressed they had language barrier and 71.4% developed problems related to severe emotions while caring dying patients and their families.

Conclusion: There is a great need to educate students about death and dying, cultural competence, communication skills and coping with emotional stress.

Keywords: perception, death and dying, feelings, thoughts, challenges

Introduction :

Student nurses are involved in caring for patients who are dying or who have been told they have a terminal illness and are faced with the process of dying. Students encounter these patients in hospitals, nursing homes, at home or in hospice care settings. Nurses are the healthcare providers that are most often with individuals at the end of

their lives. Nurses should be knowledgeable about end-of-life care. Studies show that, only 0.41% of nurses are certified in palliative care. Nursing students often have a difficult time coping

with the stress that comes with caring for those who are dying. Student nurses need to be prepared to take an active role in caring for patients who are dying or have been told they have a terminal illness. Students are in clinical settings where they may encounter death and dying. The purpose of this study is to understand the nursing student's perception in caring for dying patients and their families. The researcher seeks to gain an understanding of nursing students' (1) thoughts about caring for dying patients and their families, (2) feelings about caring for dying patient and their families, and (3) communication with dying patients and their families. The objectives of the study were to assess nursing students perception on death and dying and to identify the perception on death and dying

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among nursing students of different levels.

Materials and Methods :

A survey approach was adopted with a descriptive design and was conducted in selected Colleges of Nursing in Udupi district, Karnataka. Tool 1: Demographic Proforma and Tool 2: Semi- structured questionnaire on perception on death and dying (section A: Regarding thoughts, section B: Regarding feelings and section C: Regarding challenges) were developed by the researcher and were validated by three experts in the field of nursing. Pretesting was done among 5 samples to determine the clarity of items. Pilot study was conducted among 20 samples. Non-probability convenient sampling technique was used to select the samples. Sampling criteria were those who are willing to participate in the study and who are undergoing B.Sc or PBB.Sc or M.Sc nursing programme. Main study was conducted in selected Colleges of Nursing in Udupi district, Karnataka state among 210 nursing students. The obtained data were analyzed based on the objectives and the hypothesis by using descriptive statistics with the help of SPSS version 16.

Results :

Analysis is done by using descriptive statistics. Data is organized under the following headings.

Section 1: Description of sample characteristics.

Section 2: Description of nursing students' perception on death and dying

Section 3: Description of perception on death and dying among nursing students of different levels.

Section1 : Sample characteristics

Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of sample characteristics (n=210)

Section 2: Description of nursing students perception on death and dying

Fig 1: Thoughts perceived by nursing students on death and dying (n=210)

The data presented in fig 1 shows that while caring dying patients and their families, 66.6% perceived thoughts regarding the physical, emotional, spiritual care given to

patients who were dying and 77.6% regarding their family or friends. 57.1% perceived thoughts regarding their sufferings, death as a relief from suffering and there was a relief felt for the patient when they are no longer dealing with the illness or pain. 88% perceived thoughts about a realization that, death is a part of life, 29.5% perceived thoughts about the survival and 42.8% perceived that being able to care for dying patients as a privilege and it is an opportunity to work with those who are going through the dying process.

Fig 2: Feelings perceived by nursing students on death and dying (n=210)

The data presented in fig 2 shows that, 40.5% nursing students had physiological symptoms like nausea, muscle tension, headache , 53.8% had fear, 68.5% developed compassion, 86.6% had sadness and 46.2% developed anxiety while caring for dying patients and their families.

Fig 3: Challenges perceived by nursing students on death and dying (n=210)

The data presented in fig 3 shows that, 67.1% of nursing students unaware about how to communicate with unresponsive patient, 61.9% expressed they had language barrier and 71.4% developed problems related to severe emotions while caring dying patients and their families.

Section 3: Description of perception on death and dying among nursing students of different levels.

The data presented in table 2 shows that while caring dying patients and their families, majority of fourth year B.Sc nursing students had perceived thoughts regarding the physical, emotional, spiritual care given to patients who were dying. Majority of M.Sc nursing students had perceived thoughts regarding their family or friends. Majority of fourth year B.Sc nursing students had perceived thoughts regarding their sufferings, death as a relief from suffering and there was a relief felt for the patient when they are no longer dealing with the illness or pain. Majority of M.Sc nursing students had perceived thoughts about a realization that, death is a part of life. Majority of first year

B.Sc nursing students had perceived thoughts about the survival and Majority of PBB.Sc nursing students perceived that being able to care for dying patients as a privilege and it is an opportunity to work with those who are going through the dying process. Majority of first year B.Sc nursing students had physiological symptoms like nausea, muscle tension, headache; fear, sadness and anxiety while caring for dying patients and their families. Majority of first year B.Sc nursing students were unaware about how to communicate with unresponsive patient, expressed they had language barrier and developed problems related to severe emotions while caring dying patients and their families.

Fig 1: Thoughts perceived by nursing students on death and dying (n=210)

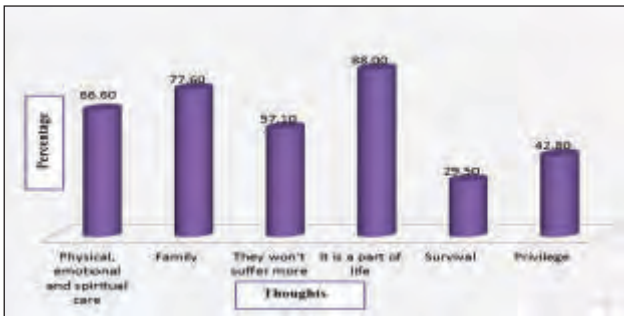


Fig 2: Feelings perceived by nursing students on death and dying (n=210)



Fig 3: Challenges perceived by nursing students on death and dying (n=210)



Table 1: Frequency and Percentage distribution of sample characteristics (n=210)

Sl. No	Sample characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1	Age		
	16 – 18	30	14.3
	18 – 20	62	29.5
	20 – 22	46	22.2
	22 – 24	48	23.0
	24 – 26	20	09.0
	> 26	4	02.0
2	Gender		
	Male	26	12.0
	Female	184	88.0
3	Type of family		
	Nuclear	184	88.0
	Joint	26	12.0
4	Religion		
	Christian	167	79.5
	Hindu	27	13.0
	Muslim	05	02.5
	Others	11	05.0
5	Course		
	First year B.Sc	35	16.7
	Second year B.Sc	35	16.7
	Third year B.Sc	35	16.7
	Fourth year B.Sc	35	16.7
	PBB.Sc	35	16.7
	M.Sc	35	16.7
6	Place of stay		
	Kerala	164	78.2
	Karnataka	22	10.4
	Sikkim	16	07.6
	Others	08	03.8
7	Nursing students who had experiences with dying patient and their families during clinical posting		
	Yes	153	72.8
	No	57	27.2

Discussion :

Recommendations

- 1 Replication of the same study on a large sample may help to draw conclusions that are more definite and generalizable to a larger population.
- 1 A similar study can be conducted using different data collection methods.
- 1 Qualitative study can be done among nursing students assess the perception on death and dying.
- 1 Replication of the similar study can be conducted by selecting samples by random sampling method.

Table 2: The frequency distribution of perception on death and dying among nursing students in different levels
(n = 35 + 35 + 35 + 35 + 35 + 35 = 210)

Sl. No	Sample characteristics	1 st year B.Sc (n=35)	2 nd year B.Sc (n=35)	3 rd year B.Sc (n=35)	4 th year B.Sc (n=35)	PBB.Sc (n=35)	M.Sc (n=35)
1	Thoughts						
1.1	Physical, emotional and spiritual care	18	25	28	31	17	21
1.2	Family	27	24	29	22	19	32
1.3	They won't suffer more	10	25	24	25	18	23
1.4	It is a part of life	24	31	31	32	33	34
1.5	Survival	18	6	8	9	6	14
1.6	Privilege	13	16	15	15	17	14
2	Feelings						
2.1	Physical symptoms	33	13	13	9	8	9
2.2	Fear	31	27	24	14	8	9
2.3	Compassion	27	30	28	17	15	27
2.4	Sadness	32	29	31	30	29	30
2.5	Anxiety	28	22	23	14	7	3
3	Challenges						
3.1	Don't know how to communicate	28	23	24	22	17	27
3.2	Language barrier	30	24	23	25	15	26
3.3	Severe emotions	33	26	29	20	14	27

Conclusion :

Understanding students' perceptions of death and dying can help educators prepare students for these situations by using the research available to plan better ways to teach

students about the needs (physical, spiritual, emotional and social) of the dying/terminal patient and their family. There is a great need to educate students about death and dying, cultural competence, communication skills and coping with emotional stress.

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