

OP 003

THE ROLE OF NURSES IN PROVIDING PALLIATIVE CARE FOR DYING CANCER PATIENTS: A META-ETHNOGRAPHIC SYNTHESIS

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Background Palliative care is a well-established approach to maintaining quality of life in people with advanced cancer. There is limited research exploring qualified nurses' role when providing palliative care for dying cancer patients. Much of it is qualitative and so findings cannot be generalised to other care settings.

Aim To synthesis evidence from published qualitative studies the explored the role of the nurses when providing palliative care to dying cancer patients.

Method A meta-ethnographic approach (Noblit & Hare 1998) was employed. Studies were included if they were undertaken between 1990–2012, data collection consisted of in-depth interviews and participants were registered nurses who provided palliative care to advanced cancer patients. Continuous comparative analysis was performed and metaphors were translated using reciprocal translation.

Results The role of nurses in the provision of palliative care can be divided into two overarching themes; direct patient care and indirect patient care. Direct patient care includes assessment, care towards the family and providing physical and psychosocial care. Indirect patient care involves multidisciplinary team working and the practice of specialist and management skills to meet patients' needs. Care is seen as a continuous 'process' that consists of providing tangible and intangible aspects of palliative nursing care. The 'tangible' aspect of care is care carried out by nurses regardless of the context that they are in, and 'intangible' care is defined as nursing actions that can be changed/adapted according to the contextual or cultural circumstances of a particular setting.

Conclusion This meta-ethnography has identified key components of palliative care nursing for dying cancer patients, regardless of the context of the care. This will permit cross-cultural comparison of palliative care provision to be undertaken in future research.