Nursing-2013
OMICS Group Conferences
Accelerating Scientific Discovery
International Conference on
Nursing & Emergency Medicine
December 2-4, 2013 Las Vegas, USA

Hospice nurses' perspectives of spirituality

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Abstract

Aim: To explore Singaporean hospice nurses' perspectives of spirituality and spiritual care.

Design: A descriptive, cross sectional design was used.

Background: Spiritual care is integral to providing quality end-of-life (EOL) care. However, patients often report that this aspect of care is lacking. Previous studies suggest that nurses' neglect of this aspect of care could be attributed to poor understanding of what spirituality is and what such care entails.

Method: A convenience sample of hospice nurses was recruited from eight hospices in Singapore. The survey comprised two parts: the Participant Demographic Details and the Spirituality Care Giving Scale (SCGS). This 35-item validated instrument measures participants' perspectives about spirituality and spiritual care.

Results: Sixty-six nurses participated (response rate of 65%). Overall, participants agreed with items in the Spiritual Care Giving Scale related to Attributes of Spiritual Care; Spiritual Perspectives; Spiritual Care Attitudes and Spiritual Care Values. Results from General Linear Model analysis showed statistically significant main effects between race, spiritual affiliation, and type of hospice setting, with the total SCGS score and four factor scores.

Conclusions: Spirituality was perceived to be universal, holistic and existential in nature. Spiritual care was perceived to be relational, and centered on respecting patients' differing faiths and beliefs. Participants highly regarded the importance of spiritual care in the care of patients at EOL. Factors that significantly affected participants' perspectives of spirituality and spiritual care included race, spiritual affiliation and hospice type.

Biography

Dr Tiew Lay Hwa completed her PhD in Year 2012 at the National University of Singapore (NUS). Her research interest is in the area of Palliative and End of Life care.

She is recently appointed as the Executive Director of a Psychiatric Nursing Home. As her keen interest is in Education, she is also an Adjunct Associate Prof in NUS since 2006. Her keen interest in Education led her to research in patient care issues such as patient safety, Palliative and End of Life care.

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