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The process of accepting patient deaths among Korean nurses: grieving over dying

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Purpose: Nurses' acceptance of patient deaths enables them to practice holistic end-of-life care and pursue positive living. The place where most deaths occur in Korea has changed from home to medical institutions, making it necessary to understand the process through which nurses who practice end-of-life care accept patient deaths. This study aimed to obtain insight into nurses' experiences of accepting patient deaths and to develop a practical theory regarding the context of this process.

Methods: This qualitative study investigated nurses' process of acceptance of patient deaths based on grounded theory.

Results: A core category of this process was found to be "grieving over dying", which consisted of the following steps: "being close by", "being attentive", "acknowledging together", and "accompanying."

Conclusion: This study established that nurses' attentiveness toward dying people is due to their grief over patient deaths, and clarified Korean nurses' process of accepting patient deaths and its related factors.