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Understanding of nurses about their first encounter with death of a patient: an educational focus

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Introduction: Nurses are involved in the care of people who are dying. The meaning of death is different in every individual and it can affect the nurse's approach about caring. For a holistic care it is needed to support and direct nurses about their dealing with patient's death and dying process. For this aim it is necessary to know how the experience of nurses is in their first deal with death. The aim of this study is exploration about understanding of nurses about their first encounter with death of a patient with an educational focus.

Methods: A qualitative study was conducted using a content analysis approach. Convenience sampling was employed to select 8 nurses in a hospital in Tehran, Iran. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Data were analyzed using descriptive content analysis approach according to Graneheim and Lundman method.

Results: Three themes emerged from data analyses. Subthemes include "vague fear", "role conflict", "harbor desire.

Conclusion: It seems nurses need education about how to control and direct their emotions and attitudes about death and dying to have a caring and supporting approach about people who are dying and their families. If this has not been included in nursing curriculum, in practical settings, there is need to pay attention to this area by nursing instructors and supervisors. Also the findings of this study can provide a base for further researches on this subject.

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