

**Experiences Of Nurses Caring For Elderly Religious: Its Implications
To The Enhancement Of Gerontological Nursing**

Robert Matthew A. Marquez

Manila Doctors College of Nursing, Manila Tytana Colleges, Philippines

Abstract:

Aging is a lifelong process and nursing care for the elderly is a sensitive process. Little is known about nurses caring for elderly religious persons. One wonders how care was delivered. According to Thornberg (2008), knowledge about the meaning of nursing practice to nurses is important to support nurses and promote excellence in the care that nurses provide. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore nurses' lived experience giving care to an elderly religious. As there were little known studies in this area of nursing it is anticipated that this study will provide a basis for further exploration and enhancement of gerontological nursing.

A descriptive phenomenological approach was used to engage with an in-depth interview to four (4) nurses. The value of a phenomenological approach in nursing is to generate valuable information, through lived-experiences. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data were carefully transcribed verbatim and were comprehensively scrutinized utilizing an interpretative phenomenological analysis.

Seven (7) main themes have emerged from the data: Reaching Out to Compassionate Caring, Exhibiting Courtesy and Forbearance, Committed to Safeguarding Human Dignity, Conquering the Bastion to Patient-Centered Care, Facilitation of Learning and Therapeutic Communication, Efflorescing the Roots of a Professional Individual and Finding a Sense of Meaning and Purpose. These themes were further clustered and at the core of study emerged Compassionate Patient-Centered Care as an essential characteristic of caring that nurses must pose. Participants described caring for elderly religious as both challenging and rewarding. This study showed the different characteristics of nurses towards promoting quality and safe healthcare practices for the elderly. The profound acts of human connection between the nurse and the elderly religious paved a way to produce a therapeutic relationship. Discovering and understanding the meanings ascribed from the different lived experience came out a simple yet profound eidos, the core essence, the intuition that captures the totality of the phenomenon – compassionate patient-centered care that unified all the themes in the study and produced a holistic approach in nursing care for an elderly religious. Compassion and Patient-Centered Care were found to be fundamental components for nursing the elderly religious. The concept of Compassionate Patient-Centered Care is basically knowing and understanding the patient and making them your partner in healthcare. The goal of compassionate, patient-centered caring is to improve the health of the patient and enrich the quality of life of the elderly through alleviation of despair and suffering. This maybe elicited through simple yet profound acts of human connection which leads to a strong and continuous patient-nurse relationship and partnership. Treating patients as people, not just illnesses, and recognizing and

Journal of Aging and Geriatric Medicine

relieving distress and suffering are fundamental to the practice of compassionate, patient-centered care. It is the core that embodies our care given to the elderly religious, the instrument that captures the important human needs of our patients and promote their healing through this life experiences.