

Enhancing Practice Conference Abstract

Title: Spiritual care: can student nurses learning contribute to leading person-centred practice?

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Abstract

Spiritual care is recognised as a neglected aspect of nurse education (Baldacchino 2011). I undertook a phenomenological study, using semi-structured interviews, to explore the experiences of student nurses learning about spiritual care. Ten student nurses agreed to take part.

I analysed the data using Van Manen's (2014) existential themes to examine the phenomena – exploring lived body, lived relations, space, time, lived things and technology. The students' individual context was diverse with some expressing Christian beliefs whilst others were agonist; however, all felt spiritual care was important within nursing practice. They gave examples where dealing with person centred approach to spiritual care was challenging and they reflected on their learning and contribution to holistic practice.

Six key areas of learning about spiritual care were identified:

- Connecting through recognition of spiritual individuality
- Embodiment of spiritual care
- Spaces of spiritual learning
- Time dimension as a spiritual factor
- Materiality as a challenge
- Technology as 'taken for granted' aspect of spiritual care

The students were fearful about saying the wrong thing but their comments showed that asking the patient and meeting their individual needs, was important to provide spiritual care. They also demonstrated their contribution to leading care by recognising spiritual distress and providing spiritual care; sometimes this involved challenging other staff or offering solutions to spiritual problems.

I wonder whether spiritual intelligence may be important process in learning about spiritual care to enable students to be aware of issues and to develop their leadership in this area. Spiritual intelligence is poorly defined (Esmaili et al 2014) but includes self-awareness, human presence dimension and personal meaning (Kaur et al 2015) aspects, which were reflected within my findings. Therefore, I will explore whether developing student nurses spiritual intelligence within education may be one way they can learn to be leaders of person centred practice.

References

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