

Oncology Nurses Attitudes Towards Death and Caring for Dying Patients: A Cross-sectional Study

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Abstract:

Background: Oncology nurses face death and the dying process frequently in their practice, which creates a tremendous impact on their roles and responsibilities and psychological well-being. The attitude of nurses toward death has a great influence on the quality of care given to patients at the end-of-life. Therefore, understanding these attitudes and their variables will not only add to improved oncology nursing care but also help in addressing the emotional needs of nurses.

Aims: The systematic review aimed at to systematically identify and critically evaluate the existing evidence regarding oncology nurses' attitudes towards death and their approach to caring for dying patients.

Methods: This systematic review was carried out comprehensively following guidelines of PRISMA. Electronic databases including that of PubMed, Medline, CORE, and Google Scholar were systematically searched for empirical studies published between 2020 and 2025. Inclusion criteria focused on quantitative, qualitative methods studies that were focused on oncology nurses' attitudes toward death and end-of-life care. Quality appraisal of included studies was performed using the Quality Assessment with Diverse Studies (QuADS) tool.

Results: Out of 17 studies that met the criteria for inclusion, most had cross-sectional designs. Overall, oncology nurses had moderate-to-positive attitudes toward death and dying care. Influencing factors included formal training in palliative care, time spent in clinical practice, as well as being associated with demographic characteristics and socio-cultural and religious backgrounds. Nurses are less anxious about the death, more resilient emotionally, and feel competent in caring for patients at the end of their lives if they have qualification-specific educational training and enough experience. By comparison, inadequate institutional support, cultural taboos, moral distress, and heavy workloads among nurses have a negative influence and result in less favorable outcomes-perceptions, emotional exhaustion, and reduced quality of care to patients at the end of their lives.

Conclusion: Educational, experiential, and organizational determinants have a substantial influence on oncology nurses' attitudes toward death and care for dying patients. Tailored educational programs, culturally sensitive interventions, and comprehensive institutional support mechanisms are essential for fostering positive attitudes, enhancing psychological resilience, and improving the quality of palliative care in oncology nursing practice.

Keywords:

Oncology nurses, Death attitudes, End-of-life care, Palliative care, Systematic review.