

Palliative Nursing: Enriching Lives, Minimizing Expenses, and Nurturing Dignity

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ABOUT THE STUDY

Palliative nursing is a specialized field of healthcare that focuses on providing compassionate and comprehensive care for individuals with life-limiting illnesses. With a primary goal of improving the quality of life for patients and their families, palliative nurses play a vital role in managing symptoms, addressing emotional needs, and facilitating end-of-life decision-making. Palliative nursing is guided by a set of core principles that shape the care provided to patients. Firstly, the principle of patient-centred care emphasizes tailoring treatments and interventions to meet individual needs and preferences. Palliative nurses collaborate closely with patients and their families to develop comprehensive care plans that address physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of their well-being.

Secondly, palliative nursing embraces a holistic approach to care, recognizing that the well-being of patients extends beyond the physical symptoms of their illness. Nurses aim to understand and support patients' emotional and psychosocial needs, offering counselling, facilitating communication, and providing a safe space for patients to express their fears, hopes, and concerns.

Thirdly, effective communication and collaboration are integral to palliative nursing. Nurses work closely with interdisciplinary teams, including physicians, social workers, chaplains, and other healthcare professionals, to ensure comprehensive and coordinated care. They also play a crucial role in facilitating open and honest conversations with patients and their families, providing information about prognosis, treatment options, and end-of-life decisions.

Essential skills in palliative nursing

Palliative nursing requires a diverse skill set to effectively meet the complex needs of patients. Firstly, clinical competence is crucial in managing the physical symptoms associated with life-limiting illnesses. Palliative nurses are skilled in pain management, addressing symptoms such as nausea, dyspnea, fatigue, and constipation. They possess expertise in administering medications, utilizing advanced pain relief techniques, and monitoring patients'

responses to treatment. Secondly, palliative nurses excel in emotional support and therapeutic communication. They create a compassionate and empathetic environment, actively listening to patients' concerns, fears, and hopes. By providing emotional support, palliative nurses help patients cope with the emotional burden of their illness, facilitating a sense of dignity, control, and overall well-being. Thirdly, palliative nurses are proficient in facilitating advance care planning and end-of-life discussions. They guide patients and families in exploring their values, preferences, and goals of care, helping them make informed decisions about treatment options, resuscitation preferences, and palliative interventions. These sensitive conversations ensure that patients' wishes are respected and honored throughout their healthcare journey.

The impact of palliative nursing

Palliative nursing has a profound impact on patients, families, and the healthcare system as a whole. Firstly, patients with life-limiting illnesses experience enhanced quality of life due to the expert symptom management and holistic care provided by palliative nurses. By addressing physical discomfort, improving emotional well-being, and fostering open communication, these nurses offer comfort and support during challenging times.

Secondly, palliative nursing plays a pivotal role in supporting families and loved ones. By offering guidance, emotional support, and bereavement care, palliative nurses help families navigate the emotional and practical aspects of caregiving. They provide education on disease progression, end-of-life care, and bereavement resources, enabling families to better understand and cope with their loved one's illness and eventual loss. Furthermore, palliative nursing contributes to the greater efficiency and cost-effectiveness within the healthcare system. By effectively managing symptoms and coordinating care, palliative nurses help reduce hospital readmissions and unnecessary emergency department visits. They work collaboratively with healthcare teams to ensure continuity of care and appropriate resource utilization, optimizing the allocation of healthcare resources.

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Palliative nursing also has a profound impact on healthcare professionals themselves. The field requires a deep level of empathy, resilience, and self-care. Palliative nurses often form strong bonds with patients and their families, providing support

during challenging and emotionally charged situations. While the work can be emotionally demanding, it is also deeply rewarding, as nurse's witness the positive impact they have on patients' lives and the comfort they bring during difficult times.