Care, compassion and competence in critical care: A qualitative exploration of nurses’ experience of family witnessed resuscitation

Justine Monks Advanced Nurse Practitioner
Critical Care
The Essence of the Study

- To gain insight into nurses’ experiences of FWR
- Nurse recruitment to the study
- Data collection
- Data analysis
- Phenomenological approach
- Van Manen’s framework for isolating thematic statements
Emergent Themes

Challenging Expertise

“It was new, not something I had ever seen before...It made me feel like crying...When she was saying, come on dad, It was a horrible situation really”. (P2).

Bonding

“There has got to be this feeling of closeness to the person...This is a vital moment, because obviously this is the last time that they are going to see this person”. (P4).
Emergent Themes

*Through the Relatives Eyes*

“I felt I was seeing it from the families perspective, rather as a trained professional...It was really distressing to think; oh my god the family are seeing this as well”. (P3).

*Balancing Technology and Humanism*

The essence of nursing in critical care
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**Conclusion**

- An insight into Critical Care nurses experiences of family witnessed resuscitation.
- Care, compassion and competency are inextricably bound.
- Presence of family in cardiac arrest scenarios evokes feelings of compassion empathy and humanism.
- Uncovering the emotional effects on family witnessed resuscitation, can contribute to a wider understanding of nursing practice in critical care.
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Justine Monks, Maria Flynn

Keywords: Care; Compassion; Critical care nurses; Critical care nursing; Family witnessed resuscitation; Practice; Qualitative inquiry

Summary: This exploratory study was grounded in a local initiative promoting family witnessed resuscitation in the critical care units of a regional cardiothoracic centre in the United Kingdom (UK). Research in this field has focused on the perceived benefits, or otherwise, of family involvement, but little is known about the impact this has on critical care nurses or their practice. This study aimed to gain insights into nurses’ experience of family witnessed resuscitation and identify any implications for critical care practice.

The study employed a phenomenological approach and interviewed six nurses who had been involved in family witnessed resuscitation. Data from the transcribed interviews were analysed thematically and organised into descriptive categories which reflected the nursing experience of these resuscitation events.

The three thematic categories generated by data analysts illustrate the challenges nurses faced in seeking to balance compassionate care and technical competence in emergency situations on critical care units. They also shared how nurses sought to reconcile these competing demands with their professional practice and responsibilities.

The findings of this study are consistent with what is already known about the challenges of critical care nursing, but suggest that more research is needed to understand the practical and emotional complexity of family witnessed resuscitation.

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