



Preparing Future Nurses for Pediatric End-of-Life Care: Integrating Emotional Resilience and Professional Competence

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Background: Why Pediatric End-of-Life Care Demands Special Preparation

Pediatric death

- has a profound and lasting impact on the emotional life of future nurses ^(1, 2)
- is emotionally more challenging than adult death for most trainees
- students feel overwhelmed, underprepared, and emotionally vulnerable ^(2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

A lack of structured preparation and institutional support ^(2, 8) may lead to long-term distress and reduced professional confidence ^(13, 14, 15, 2)



The need for emotional resilience is as vital as clinical skills!

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Methodology: Understanding Students' Needs

Literature and Interviews

The aim of this study was to discover the **impact of expectations, worries, fears and previous experiences** in relation to the **death and dying of pediatric patients** and which **theoretical and practical support** can be provided as part of the nursing students' training to improve the ability of **nursing students** to deal with the topic in a **professional and resilience-promoting manner**.

Mixed-method approach:

- **Systematic literature review** in two medical databases: PubMed, CINAHL
- Seven **semi-structured guided interviews** with nursing students

Key Findings: What Future Nurses Told Us

Pediatric death evokes sadness, fear, helplessness

- Feelings were mostly negative associated
- Students want more practical exposure and emotional guidance
- Nevertheless, all interviewees share the view that caring for the dying is one of the tasks of a (prospective) nurse

Existing coping strategies vary but are often informal and insufficient

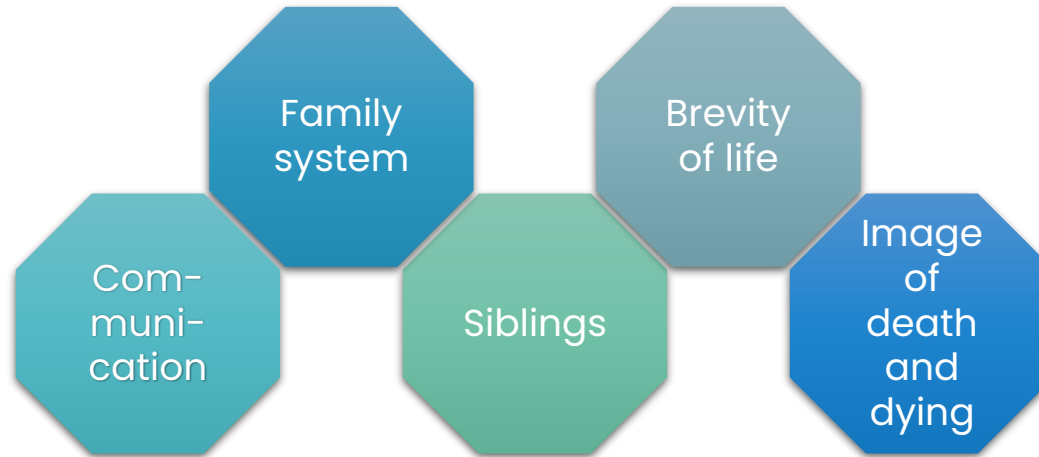
- Supportive mentorship and safe spaces for reflection are highly valued



“In fact, as it was my first time experiencing something like this, I can now simply imagine that it would perhaps have been better if someone had spoken to me about it afterwards [...]. I think that would have been a great emotional relief in the situation.” (M)

Key Findings: What Future Nurses Told Us

What makes pediatric palliative care special



► **High professional and emotional demands on nurses!**

Implications: Educational Strategies for Resilience and Competence

- Integrate end-of-life care topics early in nursing curricula
- Simulations and real-world exposure (e.g., pediatric palliative units)
- Pediatric palliative care modules or pediatric end-of-life simulations have mostly shown a positive effect ^(6,9,10)
- Structured emotional support through peer and mentor systems
- Empower students with both professional tools and emotional resilience



► **Preparing students emotionally is not optional**
—
it's ethical and essential.

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THANK YOU



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