

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Research on the Influence of Health Care Professional's Personal Experience of Pain on the Management of Pain

Ourlania Peditakti, MSc (Nurs), staff nurse, "FOKAS" Developmental Center, "IPPOKRATIO" Hospital, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Fountouki Antigoni, MSc (Health & Exercise), staff nurse, Neurosurgical ward, "AHEPA" University Hospital, Thessaloniki, Greece.

Theofanidis Dimitrios, MSc (Nurs), Clinical Professor, Nursing department, Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Author for correspondence: Dimitrios Theofanidis

Home address:

Ierosolimou 21, Kalamaria

Thessaloniki, Greece

Tel.: 00 30 2310 430440, Fax: 0030 2310 430440

Mobile: +30 694527796, E-mail : dimitrisnoni@yahoo.gr

Abstract

Background. Previous research has indicated that there is improvement in pain relief when the staff is more conscious about everyday pain management.

Aim. This study was designed to gain insight into the way the personal experience of pain affects the attitude of Health Care Professionals towards pain management. The research was undertaken between May and September 2004. It was conducted in a Greek general hospital.

Method. Qualitative methods of enquiry were employed and a phenomenological approach was adopted, based on un-structured interviews. Fifteen Health Care Professionals who had had personal experience of pain participated in this study. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed and content analysis on them was adopted.

Findings. All participants recognized the staff's insufficient knowledge of pain management. They assessed that the personal experience of pain is a chance for self-criticism. They also noticed that after this experience they are more sensitive to the problem of pain and more aware of the patients' needs. Furthermore, they proposed educational interventions that will focus on a holistic approach and on improving communication skills.

Conclusions. According to this study's findings the Health Care Professionals' personal experiences of pain helped them gain insight into the complex issue of pain. It would be unethical and irrational for Health Care Professionals to seek pain in order to improve their pain management skills, yet they can gain knowledge from those who have experienced pain and thereby improve their understanding and everyday clinical pain management.

Key words: experience, pain, phenomenology, nurse-patient interaction