C5-3: Acts of Caring: Nurses Caring for Nurses

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Abstract:
Introduction: Caring behaviors affect relationships between nurses and patients but little attention has been paid to how these behaviors influence relationships between staff nurses and their managers and peers. Nurses generally report positive relationships with their co-workers and managers, but stories of disruptive behavior such as horizontal violence and bullying are also reported. These negative behaviors can affect satisfaction and impact the psychological and physical well-being of the nurse. Research is more abundant about the state of these relationships than about the behaviors that nurture and positively influence them. These relationships can be visualized through caring and the behaviors that demonstrate caring. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe: a) the caring behaviors of nurse managers and nurse peers toward staff nurses; and b) the caring behaviors of nurses towards nurse peers.

Method(s): Data was obtained through focus groups comprised of nurses currently employed in a hospital setting (n= 12). IRB approval was obtained prior to data collection. During audio-taped interviews questions were posed regarding perceived caring behaviors demonstrated by nurse managers and staff nurses towards staff nurses. Data was transcribed verbatim and analyzed using conventional content analysis.

Results: Caring behaviors were defined by the overall theme: “Creating a Culture of Caring” with subthemes of “Supporting the Work of Nursing Practice” and “Coming to Know the Other”. Another subtheme “Negotiating Caring Interactions” described the intention to care for peer nurses being blocked by the behavior of the peer.

Discussion & Conclusions: Nurses work to create a culture of caring for both patients and staff but may encounter peers who impede the creation of this culture. When this occurs, the nurses
either attempt to break down barriers by introducing humor or by modeling appropriate behaviors or by choosing to refrain from interacting with that person. If caring behaviors towards peers contribute to the work of nursing, retreating from interaction with a peer ultimately affects patient care. This disconnect could lead to an understanding of the negative behaviors reported between peers.

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No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

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