Nurses’ experience of body nursing care: a qualitative study


*Research Unit Nursing Science, Campus Bio Medico University, Rome (IT). **Department of Biomedicine and Prevention, Tor Vergata University, Rome (IT).

**Department of Public Health and Paediatric Sciences, University of Turin, Turin, Italy.

Background. Nursing as a practice is founded on caring for the human body. Nursing work has been historically and culturally conceived as ‘bodywork’, that is, ‘a work that focuses directly on the bodies of others’. However, international nursing studies conducted on the topic of body care primarily include theoretical studies, whereas empirical studies remain sparse.

Aim. To describe nurses’ perceptions of the role of their bodies, and the bodies of patients during body care.

Method. A descriptive phenomenological study based on Husserl’s philosophical perspective. A purposive sample of Italian registered nurses representing the highest level of nursing education, different clinical experience levels and different clinical specialties were interviewed. Data were collected between July 2015 and September 2015. Open-ended interviews were analyzed using Giorgi’s descriptive phenomenological method. Lincoln and Guba’s strategies were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data.

Could you please tell me what you think and know about the body and embodiment in nursing care?

Could you please describe the first time you took care of a patient’s body?

Could you please tell me how you live the contact with a patient’s body?

What are your emotions and moods?

Could you please tell me about the problems you encounter during body care?

What helps you manage potential difficulties?

Conclusions. Nurses considered body and embodiment concepts central to nursing. Body care is treated as an experience with extraordinary emotional contents, allowing nurses to discover the essentials of human nature. In nursing education, it is necessary to reposition the place of body and embodiment concepts to develop the knowledge base for professional competence. Moreover, it is necessary to identify the educational strategies and reflective practices that can promote nurses in their ability to provide more sensitive and knowledgeable care.

References

Background image. The Veiled Christ. Sansevero Chapel Museum, Naples (IT)

Corresponding author’s email: anna-marchetti@virgilio.it

Table 1. Participants’ characteristic

Table 2. Themes and subthemes