



**Tehran University of Medical Sciences
International Campus**

School of Nursing and Midwifery

Experiences of Nurses in Caring for Children with Cancer in Ghana: A Phenomenological Study

A dissertation submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirement for

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Degree in Nursing

by

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Abstract

Background: Nurses experience in Caring for children with cancer is inherently met with contextual and diverse meanings such as: being faced with the burdens of Caring; Showing Comfort measures; developing Coping Strategies, while other studies consider this experience to be tremendously rewarding. Gaining deep insight into the lived experiences of the oncology nurses with the use of qualitative approach can help nurses, nurse managers as well as health care policy makers to plan for better and appropriate programs for improving the caring situation.

Aim: To explore the meanings of the caring experiences of the pediatric oncology nurses in Ghana.

Materials and Methods: This is a hermeneutic phenomenological qualitative study which was conducted from August 2019 - April 2020 in the Pediatric oncology unit at the Tamale Teaching Hospital (TTH) among 14 purposively sampled pediatric oncology nurses with at least 2 years work experiences. Individual face-to-face, in-depth, and semi-structured interview was conducted between 45 minutes – 1hour. Interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed inductively using Diekelman, Allen, and Tanner's (1989) approach. Trustworthiness was ensured by using Guba and Lincoln (1986) approach.

Results: One constitutive pattern "Striding in the mist of tension and professionalism" was the ultimate fulfilment of the experience of caring for children with cancer. The constitutive pattern was formed out of five relational themes:(Striving to reduce suffering, dealing with uncertainty, experiencing low caring-morale, caring for families in crisis, and being resilient for care).

Conclusions: Our results showed that nurses experiences in caring for children with cancer is met with overwhelming challenges and at the same time it led the nurses feeling satisfied with the care rendered. A deep understanding of these situations is critical to help nurses and nursing managers plan effective strategies for caring for children with cancer.

Keywords: Lived Experiences, Ghana, Cancer, Caring, Nurses, Children, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Interpretive.