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Emergency Nurses' Perspective towards End-of-life care in Emergency Department. A Literature Review

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Introduction

End-of-life care usually focus on the patients' physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs at their last moment of life with a dignified dying. End-of-life care in emergency department has been introduced in many western countries since 2009. Traditionally, emergency nurses are trained for emergency resuscitation skills, traumatic and acute medical care in emergency department. The modes of care for end-of-life patients and their families in emergency departments distinct to the emergency nurses' usual training. As the indispensable role of healthcare professionals in the end-of-life care in emergency department, it is important to understand how they perceive the end-of-life care in the emergency department.

Objectives

To review the existing literature on how the emergency nurses perceive and what are their experiences on end-of-life care in emergency department.

Methodology

Articles were collected from online databases including CINAHL, MEDLINE and PubMed for review. Papers in English and were published between 20005 and 2015 were selected, with keywords like: emergency department, emergency room, accident and emergency, end-of-life care, palliative care, and emergency nurse.

Result

There were altogether 386 articles found. After excluding duplication, irrelevant to emergency department and emergency nurses, only 21 articles were remained for the review. There were 11 qualitative, nine quantitative and one mixed-method research studies. Among these articles, 9 from Australia, with 8 from the United States and 4

from the United Kingdom. Four major findings on how the emergency nurses perceive the end-of-life care in the emergency department were concluded: beneficence to the end-of-life patients; conquering grieving for the families; professional role of the emergency nurses in end-of-life care; and obstacles for the service development. There is a lack of research studies from Hong Kong and Asian countries on this issue. Further study of emergency nurses, other health care professionals and stakeholders' perceptions are recommended.