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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Realities and ideals: Experiences and needs of pediatric oncology nurses in communication processes with children and their families at the end-of-life period: A photovoice qualitative study

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Abstract

Effective communication in end-of-life care for pediatric cancer patients is crucial. Yet, limited research focuses on the communication experiences of pediatric oncology nurses during this period. This study aims to investigate the communication experiences and needs of these nurses with children and their families during the end-of-life period. A qualitative study design with photo voice methodology was followed. The research was conducted with 16 pediatric oncology nurses working in the pediatric oncology wards of a university hospital between January and May 2023. Data were collected the "Characteristic Information Form", "Semi-Structured Interview Form", and photovoice methodology. Data were analyzed through reflexive thematic analysis. Most of the nurses are at the undergraduate level, and their working experience in pediatric oncology wards ranges from 4 months to 17 years. Seven main themes emerged: Optimistic Communication-Interaction, Mindfulness, Active Coping, Behavioral Actions, Death Uncertainty Dilemma, Interpersonal and Environmental Factors, and Discrepancy between Ideals and Reality. The study sheds light on the importance of pediatric oncology nurses' ideals versus realities upstream approach in communicating with end-of-life children and their families, empowering pediatric oncology nurses on the journey to ideal end-of-life care.

KEYWORDS

cancer, child, communication, end-of-life, nursing, palliative care

Key points

- The experiences and needs of pediatric oncology nurses in dealing with children at the end-of-life period and their families are complex, multifaceted, and largely shaped by the delicate balance between reality and ideal practices.
- The photovoice methodology in our study was to go beyond traditional qualitative methods, allowing pediatric oncology nurses to convey their experiences in a more nuanced and holistic manner.

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