

“Lived experience of working as a maternity nurse”

Abstract

Background and objectives: Maternity nursing in the world has a background as old as human life. It is a profession that guarantees the health of mothers, infants, families, and society. The difference on the issue of care makes different nature of nursing in this phenomenon. Since numerous studies have been carried out on nurses' experiences in stressful environments like CCU, ICU, and emergency ward, it seems that their experiences need to be investigated in other work environments such as maternity wards, especially in countries where due to religious and traditional beliefs, health care is only provided by the same sex as the patient. Few studies have been carried out on the experiences of maternity nurses in most countries of the world including Iraqi Kurdistan; therefore, there is little information on this issue. In this regard, the researcher tried to make use of nurses' lived experiences in order to explore the concept and meaning of the maternity nursing work from the perspective of this group.

Design: In the present study, interpretative phenomenological method with Heideggerian approach was employed in order to come up with a deep understanding of the lived experiences of the participants while working as maternity nurses.

Method: The data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of 10 maternity nurses working in Maternity Hospital, Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan. Their age ranged from 28 to 64 years. They were required to share their work experiences. Interviews were transcribed and finally analyzed according to Diekelman, Allen and Tanner approach (1989).

Results: The results of the present study were presented in one main theme, two themes and seven subthemes, the main theme “angel of mercy” include themes:(a) “life-giving services” which consisted of subthemes like “ability to take care in restriction”, “commitment”, “empathetic care”, “kind companion” and (b) “flexible care” which included subthemes like “playing different roles”, “resilience in difficulties” and “understanding cultural belief”.

Conclusion: The present study provided deep results regarding the concept of maternity nursing. In fact “being an angel of mercy” was integrated with understanding the concept of maternity nursing, which indicates the nurses’ spiritual insight and human perception about their work that is aimed at returning health, peace, and satisfaction smile to patients. According to them, helping with the birth of a healthy baby is like giving a new life to the society. Moreover, it can be deduced that obtaining others’ attention, trust, and support and accomplishing certain duties appropriate with the nurses’ scientific and practical capacities played a remarkable role in boosting their insight and understanding of their work.

Keywords: lived experience; maternity nurse; phenomenology