Factors influencing patients’ dignity: A qualitative study

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Abstract
Dignity represents the essence of nursing care; hence, nurses are professionally responsible for promoting understanding about the promotion, provision, and preservation of every patient’s dignity, while considering contextual differences. The aim of this study was to explore the factors that influence, promote, or compromise patient dignity. A purposeful sample of 14 participants with hospitalization experience was chosen, and individual in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. Using inductive content analysis, the themes and subthemes related to factors influencing patients’ dignity were explored: “persona” (”personal beliefs” and “personal characteristics”), “communication behaviors” (“verbal interaction,” “body language,” “compassionate behavior,” and “devoting enough time”), and “staff conduct” (“professional commitment,” “adequate human resources,” and “staff’s proficiency and competency”). The findings revealed that it is essential to expand nurses’ insights and knowledge about preserving patients’ dignity and the factors that influence these. Recognizing and focusing on these factors will help nurses to establish practical measures for preserving and promoting patients’ dignity and providing more dignified care at the bedside.

Keywords
Human dignity, Iran, nursing, patients, promoting dignity, religious influences

Introduction
Respecting human dignity is a universally accepted basic human right. As a topic, it is one of the most important ethical concerns in the healthcare professions, which is frequently emphasized as inherent in the nursing profession by international nursing standards. Recent healthcare literature has widely focused on issues related to patients’ dignity, but it is not a new topic in nursing. Williams pointed out that for Florence Nightingale, appropriate professionalism was whatever served not only the physical aspect of health but the dignity of those being cared for.

Human dignity is a central concept within nursing and the caring professions because it communicates the shared humanity. Rogers-Clark et al. believe that a shared humanity is evident anywhere where human beings interact, and as nurses are eager to actualize the healing relationship with patients, they have the opportunity to share their humanity. Walsh and Kowanko believe that “maintenance of patient dignity

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