

4th International Conference on

Palliative Care, Medicine and Hospice Nursing

August 27-28, 2018 | Boston, USA

Beyond meaning and connectedness: Spiritual experiences of family caregivers in a hospice setting from an eastern context

Nasreen Lalani, Wendy Duggleby and Joanne Olson
University of Alberta, Canada

Background: While caring for a seriously ill family member receiving palliative care, family caregivers go through multiple transitions, make new resolutions, adjust to changing roles and expectations, and experience grief and other complex caregiving situations where their search for meaning becomes evident. There is an increasing need to explore such experiences of spirituality among family caregivers to support their caregiving actions and practices.

Purpose: The aim of the study was to describe the experiences of spirituality among family caregivers and how these experiences shape family caregiving practices while caring for a terminally ill family member in a hospice.

Research Design: Interpretive descriptive design was used. Individual in-depth interviews were taken from family caregivers (n=18) and healthcare professionals (n=5). The study was conducted at Baitul-Sukoon Cancer Hospital and Hospice in Karachi, Pakistan.

Results/Findings: Analysis of the rich descriptions revealed four themes under study: family love, attachment, and belongingness; honoring family values and dignity; acts of compassion and selfless service; and seeking God's kindness and grace. All these themes led to a central theme 'rise above or self-transcendence'. Spirituality was found to be beyond meaning and connectedness. Spirituality enabled family caregivers to identify their uncertainties, losses, and sufferings as part of life and perceived them as invitations to open themselves to the depths of their spirits and to the support, service, and love of others as they experienced 'rise above' or self-transcendence. Findings present a novel perspective of spirituality and family caregiving from an Eastern context. Spirituality is a major resource for coping among family caregivers. Healthcare professionals need to acknowledge and develop spiritual care interventions to support family caregivers' spiritual wellbeing at the end of life in the hospice setting.

nasreen@ualberta.ca