

Blood Transfusion Matters: A Narrative Inquiry into Patients' Experience of Receiving Blood Transfusions in a Day Unit Setting whilst in a Palliative Stage of a Haematological Malignancy.

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INTRODUCTION

Most patients in a palliative stage of a haematological malignancy will become severely anaemic and be given a blood transfusion every two to three weeks, generally, in an acute hospital day unit setting.

Most research to date has been quantitative before and after studies to assess efficacy, employing participants with solid tumours, who receive blood transfusions (BT) in the hospice setting.

Limited qualitative research has been undertaken that addresses palliative haematology patients perspective of BT. No research was found that asked haematology patients' to describe their experiences regarding BT in profound detail. Thus, it was not known what patients expected post BT, either physically or psychologically, what hardships they associate with the administration of BT, and what factors affect their experience of BT. Gaining the perspectives of patients is viewed as important in evaluating healthcare (DH, 2012).

AIM

In view of the gap in academic literature, the overriding aim of this Professional Doctorate in Nursing study was to gain a deep insight into the everyday life experiences of patients who had a palliative stage haematological malignancy and received regular BT in a Day Unit setting.

The purpose of this study was to explore participants' experiences surrounding this therapy and understand any challenges they faced, and to use these insights to inform current clinical care.

METHOD

- A Narrative Inquiry approach, guided by Clandinin and Connelly (2000), was chosen to explore participants' experience.
- Within this methodological approach experience is studied via a three dimensional inquiry space : Sociality (Personal and Social), Place and Temporality.
- Dewey's (1938) pragmatic theory of experience served as the philosophical foundation.
- Four research objectives .
- A purposive sample of 8 participants recruited.
- 3 participants were in an early palliative phase; 2 in late; 3 participants were in a terminal palliative phase.
- Data obtained via 22 longitudinal, in-depth, unstructured, conversational, narrative interviews.
- Meaning, implicit within and across storied accounts, was revealed through resonant plotlines.
- Plotlines of special interest were those which illuminated feelings, hardships and concerns
- Overarching narrative storylines were developed from plotlines, which were supported by 'Found Poetry'.

REFERENCES

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RESULTS

In line with study objectives, narrative analysis of blood transfusion experiences revealed five overarching storylines.

Objective 1: To explore participants expectations and the challenges around receiving regular BT in a day unit setting.

Storyline one: Everyday blood transfusion life hangs in the bag

Developed from Plotlines:
Blood transfusion means life
Blood transfusions as a sustenance for life
An up and down everyday blood transfusion life



Objective 2: To explore healthcare practitioner role on participants' experience of BT.

Storyline two: Everyday blood transfusion life hangs in the hands of others

Developed from Plotlines:
Life in the hands of physicians
Life in the hands of nurses
Life in the hands of ward receptionists



Objective 3: To explore the effect of Place on participants' experience of BT.

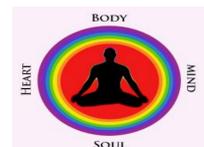
Storyline three: Everyday blood transfusion life involves waiting and anxiety

Developed from Plotlines:
Waiting in Pathology for blood tests
Waiting on the Haematology Day Unit
Anxiety associated with places in the hospital setting



Storyline four: More individualised care associated with the hospice day unit

Developed from Plotlines:
More individualised care received in hospice day unit
Hospice day unit perceived as a safer place to receive blood transfusions
Hospice day unit perceived as a more tranquil place



Objective 4: To explore the change in participants' experiences as disease progressed from early, to late, to the terminal palliative phase of a haematological malignancy.

Storyline five: An everyday SAD life during late to terminal palliative phase of a HM

Developed from Plotlines:
Somnolence overwhelms daily life;
Adversities overpower everyday life;
Desperation to hang on to life



Conclusions with recommendations to improve clinical blood transfusion care in palliative haematology patients:

1. **Develop a one-stop service on the Haematology Day Unit or preferably on the Day Unit of the Hospice**
2. **Healthcare professionals should communicate realistic expectations of BT**
3. **Early involvement of the Palliative Care Team in care of palliative haematology patients**
4. **Patients should be allowed to take a more active role in the BT process**
5. **Reorganise clinical service for patients requiring 3 units of blood**
6. **Attend to blood transfusion patients with compassionate care**
7. **Nurses should perform additional bedside monitoring in palliative patients**
8. **Raise healthcare professional awareness of hardships related to chelating agents**

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