

# A Brief Report of Research

## Care Activities for Deceased Patients of Intensive Care Nurses at a Private Hospital in Istanbul, Turkey

Sevim Çelik, PhD, RN; Selma Gürkan, RN; Yıldız Atılğan, RN

*The purpose of this study was to determine nursing care for deceased patients among intensive care unit nurses. This prospective, observational study was conducted in Istanbul, Turkey. The sample consisted of 20 intensive care nurses caring for 39 deceased patients during the study period. Researchers observed the care activities of the nurses and these were recorded. All the nurses closed the curtains or placed screens to separate the deceased patient from others and to allow some privacy for the family. Two nurses allowed the family to participate in the care. There was no difference in care activities according to the religious affiliation of the patients.*

*Keywords: Deceased patient care, Deceased patients, Nursing care*

[DIMENS CRIT CARE NURS. 2009;28(5):232-236]

### ■ INTRODUCTION

Patients who have cardiovascular and pulmonary problems; sustain trauma, sepsis, and multisystem organ failure; and have unstable hemodynamic parameters and/or other life-threatening conditions are admitted to intensive care units (ICUs). Unfortunately some of these patients die.<sup>1-3</sup> The percentage of mortality (about 20%) in the ICU in Turkey is high despite advanced medicine and improved technology. Death is seen in the ICU quite frequently; it may be expected or unexpected by health-care professionals. Nevertheless, the process may be viewed as difficult and backbreaking.<sup>2,4-6</sup>

In this situation, nurses have important responsibilities. After a patient's death, nurses fulfill these responsibilities by caring for the patient's body, providing emotional support to the family, preparing an environment to adapt to the family's cultural and religious beliefs, and following any legal procedures.<sup>4,5,7-10</sup>

When reviewing the literature, little was found about this topic. Most articles focused on the care of the dying patient, not care provided after death.

### ■ PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to determine nursing care activities for deceased patients in the ICU. The research questions were the following:

What does a nurse do to care for deceased patients in the ICU?

What are the factors that influence nursing care activities for the deceased patient?

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the hospital's director of nursing services and each of the ICU nurses after informing them about the study. The ICU nurses gave both written and verbal consent.

12. Kirchhoff KT, Walker L, Hutton A, Spuhler V, Cole BV, Clemmer T. The vortex: families' experiences with death in the intensive care unit. *Am J Crit Care.* 2002;11(3):200-209.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Sevim Çelik, PhD, RN**, is an assistant professor at the Zonguldak School of Nursing at Zonguldak Karaelmas University, Zonguldak, Turkey.

**Selma Gürkan, RN**, Division of Chief Nursery of Intensive Care Unit, Alman Hospital, Istanbul, Turkey.

**Yıldız Atılğan, RN**, Division of Directory of Nursery, Alman Hospital, Istanbul, Turkey.

This study was represented as poster 3rd EfCCNA Congress & 27th Aniarti Congress, 9-11 October 2008, Florence, Italy.

Address correspondence and reprint requests to: Sevim Çelik, PhD, RN, Zonguldak School of Nursing, Zonguldak Karaelmas University, Bahçelievler mh., Site, 67100, Zonguldak, Turkey (sevimakcel@yahoo.com; sevimak@superonline.com).

## Call for Student Abstracts

*Dimensions of Critical Care Nursing* would like to issue a call for abstracts from undergraduate and graduate nursing students for a new section called "Student Abstracts." Both undergraduate and graduate nursing students in the area of critical care conduct much good research, and I would like to share the results of this research with our readers. So many times, the results of this research are presented in the classroom setting and not disseminated to others. Here is an opportunity for those students to publish their abstracts.

If you would like to submit your research abstract, you must be either an undergraduate or graduate nursing student. Your research must be related to the area of critical care nursing. Please submit the following:

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No more than 2 paragraphs summarizing the research and its findings

Please submit the abstract to *DCCN* at:

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