

# Critique of a Qualitative Study on the Characteristics of Good Nursing Care in the ICU.

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## **Abstract**

The study conducted by Athlin and Hedelin (2007) is clearly written and contains all necessary information related to the phenomenon being studied. The purpose statement is clear and unassuming and the results are clearly supported by the data. The study contains a few shortcomings that lower the quality: convenience sampling, lack of information on similar studies, and unsupported recommendations and unstated limitations. The overall quality and dependability of this study is moderately high.

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Athlin and Hedelin (2007) conducted a qualitative research study on the definition and features of good nursing care to patients on the edge of life in intensive care units (ICU). This is an objective critique and evaluation of all aspects of their study.

## **Critique of the Introduction**

The introduction of this study is well written and builds on the purpose stated. The content flows well and mentions only necessary information related to the phenomenon being studied. While the introduction lacks information on other studies, it supports the purpose of acquiring a deeper understanding of what good nursing care is for patients in an ICU setting by giving background information on how

conflicts occur from lack of research in this particular area. The many references provided build a definite understanding of the topic and provide the reader with a general idea of what is being studied, which is high quality. The authors state that investigation of this phenomenon is crucial in providing better care, but do not state why the study should be done at this particular time. The quality of the literature review is medium due to lack of information on timeliness and previous studies.

The authors do not include a hypothesis statement, but rather state the aim of the study because it is qualitative. The aim is not a prediction of what will happen throughout the study and the authors do not attempt to side with an expected outcome, which is high quality because there is no sign of preconceived notions. The purpose statement is high quality because it is open for exploration and unassuming. The reader has a definite understanding of what is being explored

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throughout the study because of the overall high quality introduction.

### **Critique of the Methodology**

#### *Sampling*

The sampling was initially carried out by inviting 37 nurses to participate in interviews, but only 14 of the 19 who responded were included. Five of the participants were excluded by R.H. and the head nurse based on criteria deemed necessary to carry out the study. This method of sampling is considered convenience and provides low external validity to the study because it is participant selected and based on convenience of participants' scheduling, experience, and willingness to talk about their experiences.

#### *Procedures*

The writing in the methods section lacks clarity in a few areas, but overall builds a clear picture of the study. The flow of thought is organized and the sentences and paragraphs build on one another, which gives the writing medium quality. The study does not contain saturation because it is unclear whether the interviews among 14 nurses about one case in 4 sessions per group at 2 hours each is sufficient. The participant selected sampling is not considered representative because some participants were excluded based on certain criteria, which dismisses representation of nurses not inclusive to the study. The situation, setting, and context are not fully described, which makes transferability unclear. The researchers state that fittingness applies to the study, but the findings were not applied elsewhere to confirm. Interviewer corroboration is poor because only R.H. interviewed while someone observed. The study includes peer debriefing as evidenced by shared findings and interpretations with other researchers.

The 16 hours of interviews by the researcher supports the criteria of prolonged engagement and persistent observation. The study does not include a negative case analysis for cases that participants did not agree upon or those that do not support the findings. A member check is included because participants were able to validate and respond to the preliminary findings before beginning the next interview. The auditability is high as evidenced by logs, interview recordings, and transcribes of the interviews. The researchers discussed the findings, but they did not all conduct a full individual analysis, which eliminates analysis corroboration.

The confirmability is questionable because the study only mentions the interview observer giving feedback on conduct of interviews. The researchers do not bracket properly due to lack of disclosure of background information, biases, and preconceptions. The participants responded to researchers' preliminary findings, which could potentially contain researchers' views and bias. The balance of the study is poor because only the nursing profession is represented. The study lacks many of the rigor criteria required for a high quality qualitative study, which gives the findings medium dependability and quality.

### **Critique of the Results and Discussion**

The results section of are of high quality and depicts the findings clearly. The findings provide an excellent visualization of what was found and strongly support how it relates to the aim of the study. The aim of acquiring a deepened understanding of what good nursing care is for patients in an ICU setting was explored thoroughly by including the nurse, patient, and family members' prospective. The prospectives provided the nurses with an overall understanding of how to give the best possible care to those recovering, dying, or unsure of their state. The researchers provide vivid detail for all of the steps taken to approach understanding good nursing care and carrying it out. The writing in the results section is of high quality because it flows well, builds a clear picture, and is logical. The findings are precise and all necessary information is given for the reader to fully understand the study.

The discussion section is of high quality and the findings and interpretations are well discussed by the researchers. There are many previous studies included in the discussion section to relate the findings and prove them important in the aim to understanding good nursing care for patients in an ICU setting. The researchers have many interpretations that are well supported by other studies and some that contradict based on differing methods among studies. The limitations of small number of participants, confusion of understanding in some areas, and bias of nurses are openly discussed in a transparent manner. The writing in the discussion section is of high quality because each sentence and paragraph builds on the other and the ideas are expressed logically and clearly. The writing provides a clear idea of researchers'

interpretations and how the study relates to similar studies on patient care in ICU settings.

### **Critique of the Conclusion**

The conclusion is of medium quality and fulfill the aim of the study because the researchers acquired a deeper understanding of what good nursing care is for patients in an ICU setting. The researchers mention the main findings of the study that support the aim, which clarifies their understanding for the reader. The researchers also add their well supported interpretations of what the findings may indicate in regards to these patients. The limitations are mentioned in another section of the study, but are not included in the conclusion. The researchers conclude that other studies need to be done with patients' relatives and teams in the ICU. While these studies would relate to this study, it is not a well evidenced recommendation because it does not relate to good nursing care and would only give a better understanding of ICU care in general. The researchers also recommend a study on nurses' communication through patients' bodies. This is an area that the study sought to use, but had little understanding on its effects on patient care. The researchers provide evidence from other studies to support this recommendation. The writing in the conclusion is high quality and flows well with clear sentences and paragraphs that build on one other.

### **Summary**

The study begins with a high quality introduction. The content is clear and flows well with only necessary information related the phenomenon being studied. The quality of the literature review is medium due to the lack of information on timeliness and previous studies. The purpose statement is high quality because is open for exploration and unassuming. The sampling is of convenience and provides low external validity to the study because it is participant selected and based on convenience of participants' scheduling, experience, and willingness to talk about their

experiences. The writing in the methods section lacks clarity in a few areas, but overall builds a clear picture of the study. The flow of thought is organized and the sentences and paragraphs build on one another, which gives the writing medium quality. The methods section is of medium quality and dependability due to lack of much of the criteria required for a high quality study. The results section depicts the findings clearly and supports the aim of the study while fully discussing the findings, which is high quality. The writing is high quality because it flows well and is clear for the reader to understand. The discussion section contains many studies for comparison as well as interpretations that are well supported. The limitations are discussed and the writing is high quality with clear, concise, and well flowing sentences and paragraphs, which gives the discussion section high quality overall.

The conclusion section is of medium quality because the aim of the study is fulfilled and most interpretations are supported by the results of study, but there are some recommendations that are not supported and the limitations are not discussed. The writing in the conclusion section is of high quality because it is clear and flows well. The overall quality and dependability of this study is moderately high because it meets most of the criteria of a high quality study, even though it is lacking in a few areas.

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### **REFERENCES**

Athlin, E., Hedelin, B., & Hov, R. (2007). Good nursing care to ICU patients on the edge of life. *Intensive and Critical Care Nursing*, 23, 331-341.