

## **Abstract**

This study focuses on exploring the experiences of nurses in relation to the dying and deceased patients, particularly examining how their personal spirituality influences these experiences. The theoretical part elucidates concepts such as dying, death, and spirituality. It also delves into palliative care, its principles, and history, as well as discussing the nursing profession. The psychological aspects associated with the dying and death of patients are also addressed in this section. The final part of the theoretical section focuses on selected research studies related to the topic.

The aim of the empirical part is to analyze the experiences and attitudes that nurses adopt in caring for the dying and deceased bodies. Another objective is to examine how nurses cope with the dying and death of patients and how their personal spirituality influences this process. The main method used in this work is the interpretative phenomenological method, and data collection is conducted through semi-structured interviews. A questionnaire survey is also employed for a broader perspective.

The results provide insights into various perspectives of nurses on dying and death in relation to their personal spirituality. The research revealed that the experience of the death and dying of patients is influenced by several factors, with the dominant factor being the age of the dying individual. Nurses describe negative experiences when a child, young person, or when the cause of death is an accident or injury. Nurses cope with dying and death in various ways, often of a spiritual nature. Coping begins on the ward, with the most common ritual being the opening of windows, associated with the belief in the human soul. Belief in the human soul and the existence of an afterlife provide relief and motivation for their work. Nurses also cope through conversations with colleagues. Some healthcare professionals also resort to personal rituals associated with meditation, prayer, and other forms of spirituality. Despite some mentioning negative coping mechanisms, such as alcohol consumption, these are presented more as exceptions in extreme situations. Personal spirituality plays a significant role in coping with these emotionally challenging experiences, manifesting not only in the performance of their professional duties but also in their everyday lives. Practices such as opening windows in the workplace, meditation, prayers, and symbolic activities like lighting candles are expressions of personal spirituality.