

# PARISH NURSING: SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

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**Purpose:** This poster will present a synthesis of research on parish nursing and propose a research study based on the findings.

**Method:** A literature search was executed using on-line PubMed (1990-2004) and CINAHL (1990-2004) databases to identify research studies on parish nursing. Reference lists of articles were reviewed for additional articles. Twenty studies were found and reviewed.

**Findings:** Of the twenty studies that were found, sixteen used a quantitative design and four used qualitative designs. Eight of the quantitative studies were described as descriptive, while the remainder were exploratory or evaluative. The research methodologies used for the qualitative studies were ethnography and grounded theory. Parish nurses were the participants in eleven studies and health care consumers participated in ten studies, as one ethnographic study used both parish nurses and health care consumers as participants. The findings from the review of the empirical literature can be divided into three categories: needs assessment, parish nursing care, and perceptions of parish nursing. Needs assessments identified specific parish nursing activities of interest to the participants, which were screenings, education, and services to specific groups. Research about parish nursing care identified health promotion, education, screenings, and being there/listening as the most frequent parish nursing activities. Research on perceptions of health needs and parish nursing activities identified caring nurse-client interactions, screenings, and education as the most beneficial parish nursing activities. Although many studies identified nurse-client interactions and listening as important aspects of parish nursing, no studies investigated the parish nurse-client relationship from the client's viewpoint.

**Discussion:** Parish nursing is a relatively new area of community health nursing practice. A review of the empirical literature on parish nursing reveals that the studies done to date have been mainly quantitative studies with parish nurses as participants in more than half of the studies. Only four qualitative studies were found and none of these studies were phenomenological. No studies were found that described the nurse-client relationship in a parish setting; therefore, a phenomenological study of the lived experience of receiving care from a parish nurse is proposed.