

## **ADVOCATING FOR PATIENTS' WISHES AT END-OF-LIFE**

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to examine the experience of nurses who advocate for patients' wishes at end-of-life care. The general concept of patient advocacy has been examined through qualitative studies, but what it means to advocate in the end-of-life situation is not well described. An underlying premise is that advocating for patients' wishes during the end-of-life transition may require specific nursing skills with unique consequences for nurses.

**Method:** A qualitative approach is being used to examine registered nurses' perspectives on their role as advocate for patients during the end-of-life transition. Practicing nurses who have advocated for patients' wishes during the end-of-life transition are being recruited through local professional organizations, snowball effect, and direct selection. The in-depth interviews consist of an over-riding question, "What was it like to serve as an advocate for a patient and/or family during the transition at end-of-life?" The participants are asked to describe a particular situation, and further probing questions are used as needed to clarify the interviews. The taped interviews are transcribed verbatim and analyzed for common themes and patterns.

**Findings:** Data collection and analysis are in progress, with preliminary themes identified for the poster presentation.

**Discussion:** A deeper understanding of strategies that have been successful in advocating for patients at end-of-life may give insights for nurses in meeting the needs of patients and families at end-of-life. These qualitative data could serve as a basis for development of tools for quantitative research as well as nursing interventions to be tested through further research.

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