

# Caring in research and practice - some nursing aspects

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## Abstract

This thesis has a caring science perspective (caring in nursing). The general aim was to gain a deeper understanding of important aspects of caring in clinical practice from both the patients' and nurses' perspectives and to illuminate essential aspects of caring for future nursing research.

In Study I, aspects of caring important to women (n = 10) suffering from breast cancer and the importance of the outcome of caring for patients' health and wellbeing was illuminated with a descriptive exploratory method. In Study II, caring and its influence on excellent nurses' (n = 5) attitudes, actions and professional growth was studied with a descriptive phenomenological approach.

In Study III, caring as described in the medical and nursing records of lower-limb amputees (n = 45) was explored by content analysis. Study IV was conducted to illuminate essential areas in caring for future patient-related nursing research. A three-round Delphi technique was used on 95 nurses within a health care district.

The results highlight the need for health care professionals who are competent, compassionate, courageous and concordant in order to develop caring in health care practice. The results also indicate that caring has a positive impact on vulnerable patients' health and wellbeing and on nurses' professional growth. Furthermore, this thesis explores the problem of documenting patients' suffering and caring needs in nursing records and the risk of inadequately prioritizing or of underestimating these needs. When prioritizing important areas for patient-related nursing research, informed nursing practitioners prioritize research areas that will assure patients' wellbeing and a caring environment. Research areas across the full continuum of care, from wellness to death, are regarded as important. A focus on research aimed at preserving humanistic values and developing collaboration between health care providers across organizational boundaries in the health care system is stressed. This thesis points out the importance of caring encounters in modern health care practice and the need for investigation and research on connections with the creative use of health care resources in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Keywords: caring in research; caring in practice; patients' perspectives; nurses' perspectives; descriptive exploratory method; descriptive phenomenological method; content analysis; Delphi technique.

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