THE EXPERIENCE OF PATIENT DIARIES IN A BURN UNIT FROM A NURSING AND PATIENT PERSPECTIVE (P111)

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Introduction: Major burn injury and the following treatment may have psycho-social consequences for the injured persons, and posttraumatic stress syndrome (PTSD) and impaired quality of life are not uncommon after discharge from burn centers. During hospital stay, a majority of patients treated on ventilator will experience loss of factual memories or delusional memories. In addition, burn patients have to go through several anesthesias over a long time period, because of frequent wound care. To help the patient to regain memories from hospital stay, burn care nurses have been writing patient diaries. Diaries have been documented to prevent PTSD, and enhance quality of life in general intensive care patients. Little is known about burn patients’ experience of reading the diaries.

Methods: Focusing on the quality of the patient diary nursing procedure, a review was conducted of the existing diary protocol and the experience of nurses related to this practice. In order to explore and describe the experience of reading a diary written by burn care nurses during hospitalization, an interview with one patient, TBSA > 90%, was conducted 1,5 year after the accident.

Results: The unit guideline recommends starting to write a diary between 0-3 days after admission in the burn center. Diaries were offered mainly to patients receiving invasive ventilator support. The workload for nurses was approximately 15 minutes for the first diary entry, and about 10 minutes for the following daily note taking. The nurses believe the diaries have a positive impact on the patients, and experience prevention from post-discharge loss of wellbeing as the main purpose of the diary. The patient reported positive feelings about having and reading the diary. In particular, the patient recognized the severity of injury and treatment, the small important steps of recovery, and all friends and family who gave their support while the patient was hospitalized. Information about operations and medical equipment in the diary was useful and easy to understand. The patient also appreciated person-centered reports from the surrounding world, and that family members wrote their own diary.

Conclusion: Diaries written by nurses may help patients to regain a coherent history of what has happened to them while they were hospitalized at the burn center, and it also connected to the outer world of interests, family and friends. The diary may also guide follow-up conversations. Nurses experience the diary group as very important for successful implementation of patient diaries.