

# Using Phenomenology to Explore Student Nurses' Experiences of Spiritual Care

**Ann Price, Canterbury Christ Church University**

**Background:** Spiritual care is viewed as integral to holistic nursing practice but studies suggest that most nurses feel unprepared to deal with spiritual needs (Cooper et al 2013). Initial findings of this phenomenological study, where student nurses discuss their experiences of spiritual care, will be outlined in this presentation including exemplars that are relevant to critical care practice.

**Aim:** The presentation will focus on phenomenology as a methodological approach and initial findings around student nurses' experiences that have transformed their understanding of spiritual care.

**Methods:** Phenomenology (Van Manen 2014) was chosen for this study as it draws on the lived experience of participants to develop an understanding of the phenomena being explored. This approach fits with the research aim to understand aspects that transform students' understanding of spiritual care. The methodology uses a hermeneutic interpretative approach which explores the underlying meaning that is expressed by participants. Students volunteered to participate in the study and were interviewed using a semi structured schedule. Ethical approval was gained before starting data collection.

**Analysis:** The use of interpretative analysis will be discussed considering the benefits and limitations when used in phenomenological research (Todres & Holloway 2010). Exemplars from the study will be used to demonstrate the inductive approach in phenomenological work and potential implications for critical care practice will be outlined.

**Results:** Phenomenological methods produced some rich descriptions exploring spiritual care by students. Results using Van Manen (1990) approach are presented as a way of finding areas of wonder and meaning within the texts. The philosophy underpinning this and usefulness of this for practice will be explored.

**Summary:** This presentation should enable delegates to consider the use of phenomenology as a research approach, particularly related to spiritual care practices.

## References:

- Cooper, K.L.; Chang, E.; Sheehan, A.; Johnson, A. (2013) 'The impact of spiritual care education upon preparing undergraduate nursing students to provide spiritual care'. *Nurse Education Today*. 33. 1057-1061.
- Todres, L. & Holloway, I. (2010) 'Phenomenological Research'. In: Gerrish, K. & Lacey, A. (Eds) *The Research Process in Nursing*. 6th edition. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons. pp 177-187.
- Van Manen, M. (1990) *Researching lived experience: human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press.
- Van Manen, M. (2014) *Phenomenology of Practice*. USA: Left Coast Press.