

## **Coping Strategies and Attitudes of Nurses towards Death and Dying at St. Vincent de Paul Residence for the Elderly**

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The last act of life is dying. Our vision as people should be the humanisation of death and its healing possibilities. Our mission as nurses should be competent, compassionate and intensive caring (Kyba 1999).

The aim of this study was to explore the nurses' knowledge, experience, attitudes and coping strategies adopted when caring in situations of dying and death and to find out about any perceived similarities in quality between living and dying.

A descriptive survey was designed and undertaken amongst all full-time qualified nurses in the grade of nursing and deputy nursing officers, registered and enrolled nurses at St.Vincent de Paule Residence for the Elderly (S.V.P.R.). Data was collected by using a questionnaire to which 128 nurses (65.6%) responded.

Findings demonstrate that nurses acknowledged that education related to death and dying during their nursing training was insufficient. Most of the respondents agreed that it is important to enhance their knowledge and attitudes by in-service training.

The study revealed that nurses are aware of the needs dying residents and their relatives require. Yet, nurses acknowledge that they are not always competent to meet all the essential needs. Stress is a common event amongst nurses caring for dying residents and support both at ward and administration level is essential to ensure dignified end-of-life care.