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Titolo tesi: The centrality of Body and Embodiment in nursing care

ABSTRACT

Introduction. Despite nursing work has been historically and culturally conceived as “bodywork”, the nursing international theoretical and empirical researches on this aspect of nursing care are still neglected. Some international articles do not include the Italian nursing perspective. The literature primarily comprises theoretical studies, whereas empirical studies are sparse. Most of these empirical studies involve quantitative studies, while qualitative studies are rare. Moreover, from the international literature emerges that in nursing education there is little attention to the development of body care competence and that in Italy there are no studies describing the relevance of this competence in nursing curricula and what educational strategies are adopted to develop it. This dissertation aims to examine in depth the concepts of body and embodiment in the Italian nursing literature, experience and education, and to compare these findings with the international literature.

Methods. Firstly, a scoping study of Italian nursing literature was conducted. It was conducted in accordance with the framework outlined by Arksey and O'Malley and following the recommendations by Levac, Colquhoun, and O'Brien. The qualitative content analysis process was conducted according to Elo and Kyngäs. Secondly, a qualitative study aimed to describe nurses' perceptions and embodied experiences during patients' body care was conducted. This study used a descriptive phenomenological study based on Husserl's philosophical perspective. Open-ended interviews were analysed using Giorgi's descriptive phenomenological method. Lincoln and Guba's strategies were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the data both in scoping study and in qualitative study. Thirdly, the congruence between qualitative findings of phenomenological study and Tuning competences was identified. Fourthly, a cross-sectional study was conducted with the aim to ascertain the relevance that Italian nursing university lecturers attributed to the 40 competences of the Italian version of Tuning Nursing Educational in the nursing Bachelor's and Master's Degrees.

Findings. In the scoping study, 2.536 records were identified, from which 18 were selected for the final review. Three generic categories emerged from qualitative content analysis: the conceptual category, the nursing care category, and the education category, each including eight, seven, and two subcategories, respectively. From the qualitative study emerged an overarching theme “Body care is the heart of nursing” and four major themes: (1) “Body care seizes the essence of person”, (2) “Body care touches the heart of person”, (3) “The body generates opposite strategies of care”, and (4) “In time, the body ‘nourishes’ the helping relationship”. The cross-sectional study found that the most relevant competences for Italian Bachelor's Degree were the skills associated with the use of appropriate interventions, activities and skills in nursing and the skills associated with nursing practice and clinical decision-making. In particular, the competence pertaining to managing medications and other therapies, obtained a higher score than body care competence. For the Master's Degree, leadership, management and team competences were the most important.

Conclusion. The scoping study has highlighted that the Italian nursing literature about body and embodiment is sparse and mainly includes discussion articles. Similarly to international literature, in the Italian nursing culture, the terms body and embodiment are often used as synonyms. From the qualitative study emerges that body care is an experience with extraordinary emotional contents, allowing nurses to discover the essentials of human nature. Our qualitative findings seem to provide a conceptual base for some of the competences included in the questionnaire



Tuning Nursing Educational. The third study suggests that Italian nursing lecturers attribute a high relevance to body care competences in Bachelor's Degrees, but the competence related to managing medications and therapies obtained the highest score. Probably, this result reflects that the biomedical model is still dominant in nursing education and that body care is still an undervalued aspect.