Abstract

Background: Impacts of regular occupational exposure and experience of patient death on nurses’ professional quality of life and well-being. Despite the impacts, it has not yet been adequately addressed by professional training, research and by employers of nurses. **Purpose:** To analyze the impacts of occupational exposure, experience of patient death and death situations on nurses’ professional quality of life and recommend strategies to curtail them. **Methods:** Studies were retrieved from three databases CINAHL, SCOPUS, MEDLINE and reference lists of relevant journal publications. **Results:** The findings show that the impact of experience of patient death on nurses positively or negatively depending on the way patient death is perceived (good or bad). The positive outcomes include increased professionalism, devotion to patient care, bonding with deceased patient’s family members and individualized patient care. The negative impact may be short-term emotional reactions such as fear, severe grief, and self-doubt. The short-term adverse outcomes can initiate long-term consequences such as compassionate fatigue, burnout, and withdrawal from practice among nurses with inappropriate coping. **Conclusion:** Occupational exposure to death situations can adversely influence patient care and nurse’s professional quality of life. Nurse educators, employers, and researchers should play a proactive role in enhancing nurse’s knowledge, skills, and coping.

**Keywords:** death, emotional support, grief, nurses, occupational exposure, professional quality of life