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Nurse's Attitudes Toward End-of-life Discussions with End Stage Renal Disease Patients

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With the ageing of the renal dialysis population, there is an increased need to know and understand patients' wishes about end-of-life care. New government regulations have made discussions about advance directives with patients a standard of care for hemodialysis patients. Understanding nurse attitudes about these discussions is an important consideration for successful implementation of this new standard. Using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a guiding framework, an 11 item, 4-point Likert type survey was developed based on three belief constructs consisting of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived control to explore nurse attitude toward having end-of-life care discussions with end-stage renal disease patients. A convenience sample of 39 registered nurses who work with end-stage renal disease patients in clinic setting within a tri-county Midwestern area were recruited to respond to this survey. 23 nurses responded for a return rate of 59%. Responses to the survey showed varied beliefs between the nurses. 100% of the nurses agreed that family and or caregivers should be included in end-of-life discussions. 91% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that end-of-life discussions cause patients to lose hope. However, only 48% responded positively to the statement regarding the ability to initiate conversations with patient; and 35% positively to the statement regarding asking patients about end-of-life care routinely. These findings will be used to further nursing education development of end-of-life care in the end- stage renal disease population.

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