Results of Energy-Based Caring Modalities by Holistic Nurses Survey Released

Holistic Nurses’ Use of Energy-Based Caring Modalities, a qualitative research article recently featured in AHNA’s Journal of Holistic Nursing (JHN) September 2018 issue explores a study focused on gathering data on the scope and context of energy-based modalities (EBM) along with the meaning of the concept of “human energy field” to the nursing discipline. The study was designed to document current and potential uses of the nursing diagnosis addressing the energy field and gather information on the concept of energetic healing.

Results from the study found that holistic nurses use EBMs on a day-to-day basis and are implemented in all nursing specialty areas, with individuals from all ages and practice settings. EBMs were identified being implemented with the greatest frequency as interventions for pain, the most commonly with cancer.

Four themes emerged from the study analysis:

1. Energy-based modalities are caring modalities used to treat a wide range of identified nursing concerns (nursing diagnosis).
2. Energy-based caring modalities are implemented across the life span and to facilitate life transitions.
4. Energy-based modalities transcend labels of “conditions” or “diagnoses” and are used within a holistic framework for patient care.

The study included an open ended question on a survey asking participants, to “provide a description of the kinds of patient conditions where you use energy-based modalities in your practice”, in addition to information about their level of education, years of experience and if they were certified in any specialty areas. Four hundred and twenty-four individuals who self-identified as holistic nurses participated. Of those responding, 77% were in the nursing profession for over 21 years and almost half (44%) held graduate degrees.

The study used a qualitative, exploratory approach to gather information as this approach is used in situations where there is little to no information about a phenomenon (practice of EBM among holistic nurses) and conventional content analysis to interpret meaning of data giving a representation of what
the participants experienced. Conventional content analysis doesn’t use preconceived thematic categories rather it describes themes that come directly from the data.

Three-fourths of survey participants reported they used an identified nursing theory or theory of holism to guide their practice. The findings clearly illustrate holistic nurses recognize a large array of health-illness situations where an energy field perspective for nursing care is needed.

While the study has limitations the objective was to establish a description of EBMs within nursing practice, which was achieved.

For future studies it is significant that the energy-field diagnosis in NANDA-I taxonomy [“imbalanced Energy Field”] remain available. This makes it possible to document certain aspects of holistic nursing care which can then be used to assess effectiveness. The authors recommended further exploration of contexts for providing EBMs and raising questions about EBMs in studies of nursing practice, specifically in pain management and cancer care as best next steps for research on this topic.

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