

Critical illness - healthpromoting conversation for families

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Introduction: Families having a family member with critical illness in an intensive care unit face a demanding situation, threatening the normal functioning of the family. Family members often suffer from anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress syndrome longer compared to the patient being critical ill. In order to gain a better understanding of family adaptation and the family as a unit, the experience of each family member needs to be acknowledged. Still, there is a knowledge gap regarding the family members wellbeing during and after critical illness.

Aim: To investigate outcomes of a nurse led intervention, Health promoting conversations with families on family functioning and wellbeing in families with a member who had been critical ill.

Methods: Families were randomized to health promoting conversations or ordinary care. Twelve qualitative interviews with family members (n=15) who have had a family member with critical illness and had got health promoting conversations was performed. Inclusion criteria were patients with a minimum of 72 hours at the ICU, and at least one family member (>15 years) interested to participate in the study. The interviews were analyzed with content analyze.

Results: Family members experienced strengthen togetherness, a caring attitude and confirmation through the health promoting conversations. The caring and calming conversations were appreciated although exhausting feelings came up again. Working through the experience and being confirmed promoted their wellbeing.

Conclusions: Health promoting conversations were considered to be healing as the family members take part of each other's feelings, thoughts and experiences of the critical illness.

Biography:

Gunilla Hollman Frisman, is CCRN, PhD and Associate professor at the Department of Nursing, the Faculty of Medicine, the University of Linköping, Sweden. She is responsible for the Specialist Nursing Programme in Intensive Care, on advanced level. She is a tutor to three doctoral students and also tutoring clinical scientific projects as she also has a clinical position at the University hospital of Linköping, Sweden.