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**DYING TO KNOW:  
A Qualitative Study Exploring Nurses' Education in Caring for the Dying**

A Thesis presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored how Registered Nurses with experience of caring for the dying share their knowledge and skills with new graduate nurses in the clinical setting.

The Research Questions were: What clinical knowledge/skills do 'expert' Registered Nurses possess that allow them to care competently and confidently for patients in their final forty-eight hours of life? How might these experienced nurses most effectively share their knowledge/skills with new graduate nurses in the clinical setting? The aims of the study were, firstly to describe the clinical experiences of Registered Nurses with expertise in care of the dying in a variety of practice settings. Secondly, to develop a written document whereby experienced nurses can share their knowledge/skills of care of the dying with new graduate nurses (as a supplement to the findings of this study).

The data was collected in terms of demographic information, and a single semi-structured interview was conducted with each participant. Each participant was also asked to complete a written clinical narrative. The data was analysed using Luborsky's method of thematic analysis. The interview transcripts were read and reread and similar topics were grouped as phrases and coded as themes. The major themes were described in detail using excerpts from the interviews and narratives of the participants. Clinical stories of practice shared by the participants in their interviews are included with the clinical narratives in the Resource Document.

There was a strong emphasis in the findings of this study on one-to-one sharing between the experienced and new graduate nurse throughout the dying process. The sharing was in the hands-on care provided, stories of experience and reflection on the care given. The concept of 'care pairs', the use of resource nurses and the resource document discussed in the recommendations could be used in a variety of clinical settings.

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I am extremely grateful to my Research Supervisors, Alison Viskovic and Michelle Knight for their availability, guidance, support and encouragement throughout the past two years. It was their attention to detail that made the process a smooth one.

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Massey University Human Ethics Committee approval		
Manawatu-Whanganui Ethics Committee approval		
Copy of advertisement and poster		

Copy of letter advertising the study  
Information Sheet  
Consent Form  
Guidelines for interview (questions) and written clinical narrative  
Transcriber's Agreement

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