

# A VIGNETTE STUDY ON THE SPIRITUAL CARE OF PATIENTS WITH MALIGNANT BRAIN TUMORS (NEUROSPIRIT-AT): THE IMPORTANCE OF TIME, SPACE AND A HUMAN ENCOUNTER



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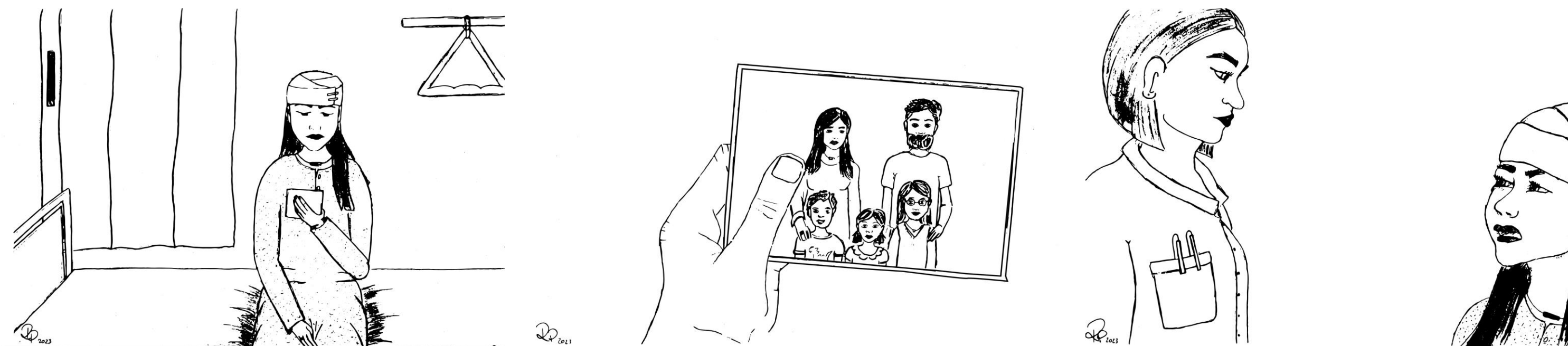
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## Introduction

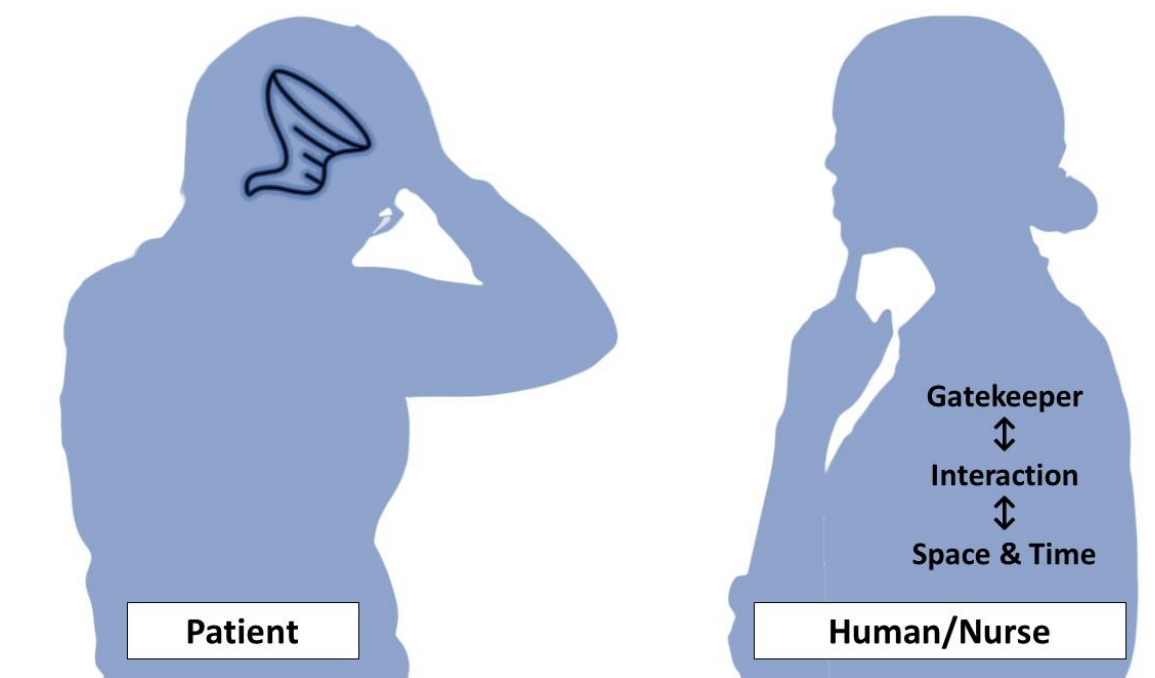
Individuals with primary malignant brain tumors may have specific spiritual needs that must be considered in neurosurgical care.<sup>1</sup> Disease prognosis, cognitive changes, and another bad, more stressful symptoms characterize the course of the disease. The threat to life and possible loss of personality can be existential challenges.<sup>2</sup> This study aimed to describe nurses' different attitudes towards spiritual care and to derive adequate interventions regarding the spiritual needs of people with malignant brain tumors.



## Findings

A total of 184 nurses received links to the online survey, and 56 responses were included in the analysis (30,4%). The researcher identified five themes. The themes "Human/Nurse - Human Encounter as Work", and "Being there and Time: Giving Space to Spirituality" show that nurses know about the importance of their personal engagement with patients' spiritual needs.

However, this engagement can be experienced as a burden, especially if nurses lack training, space, and time. Other nurses described acting task-oriented, concentrating on so-called core competencies, which reflects their attitudes as healthcare professionals. Nurses' capacities to acknowledge patients' spiritual needs might depend on available time and space.



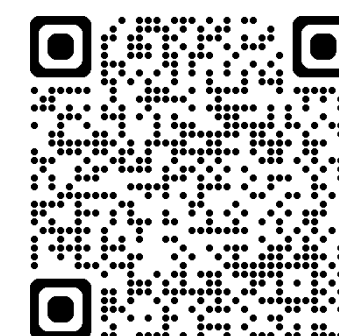
## Methods

This cross-sectional, multicenter, qualitative vignette study using the online survey tool LimeSurvey was conducted among Austrian neurosurgical nurses.<sup>3</sup> The researcher analyzed the data with a reflexive thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke).<sup>4</sup> Due to the voluntary nature of participation and anonymity of the participants, there were no ethical concerns at any point of the study.

For more information on the vignette, its design and construction see:

Grabenweger, R., Völz, D., Bumès, E., Weck, C., Best, M., & Paal, P. (2023).

Vignettes as a novel research tool in spiritual care: A methods paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. doi:10.1111/jan.15908



## Conclusions

Spiritual care is important in accompanying patients with brain tumors in the neurosurgical setting since uncertainty can be particularly stressful before diagnosis. However, the influence of working conditions on nurses' attitudes must be considered. Palliative care, including spiritual care training courses, seems necessary to strengthen caregivers' skills in the context of needs-oriented holistic care.

### References:

<sup>1</sup> Nixon, A., & Narayanasamy, A. (2010). The spiritual needs of neuro-oncology patients from patients' perspective. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, no-no. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2702.2009.03112.x; <sup>2</sup> Philip, J., Collins, A., Brand, C. A., Moore, G., Lethborg, C., Sundararajan, V., . . . Gold, M. (2014). "I'm just waiting...": an exploration of the experience of living and dying with primary malignant glioma. *Supportive Care in Cancer*, 22(2), 389-397. doi:10.1007/s00520-013-1986-1; <sup>3</sup> Grabenweger, R., Völz, D., Bumès, E., Weck, C., Best, M., & Paal, P. (2023). Vignettes as a novel research tool in spiritual care: A methods paper. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. doi:10.1111/jan.15908; <sup>4</sup> Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2022). *Thematic analysis: a practical guide*. Los Angeles : London : New Delhi : Singapore : Washington DC : Melbourne : SAGE.

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