Longing: A Concept Analysis

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Problem Statement

- ❖ Although longing has been found in the nursing literature, it is poorly defined and difficult to assess for in patients and families.
- ❖ A research project using Rogers (2000) Evolutionary View of Concept Analysis was undertaken to identify key attributes to develop a definition of longing.

Sample by Discipline of First Author

Instances of Longing/Frequency

Mental Illness	16
Terminal illness	7
Sexuality	6
Refugees/Immigrants	6
Caregiver role	5
Children with disabilities	4
Relationship within family	4
Homeless	3
AIDS patients	2
Alzheimer patients	2
Child with cancer	2
Child abuse	2
Chronic disease	2
Chronic pain	2
Elderly near death	2
Genocide	2
Grief of children	2
Rehab post MI	2
Separation of parent and child	2
Violence	2

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Definition of Longing

Earnest, heartfelt desire for something, some state, or some relationship without which one's life does not feel complete. It appears as a disconnection within person's relationships, health, and/or purpose in life due to illness, injury, disability or death. Although an individual or family primarily experience longing as feelings of grief, anger, sadness, despair, hurt, abandonment, and vulnerability; hope was also expressed.

Attributes

Disconnection--separation, isolation, interruption of life, had something but now do not have

Hope--looking forward

Existential--meaning and purpose to life

Abandoned--feeling of isolation, deserted

Despair--depression, hopelessness, desperation, discouragement, distress, agony and anguish

Sad--feeling of unhappiness, down, joyless

Vulnerability--seeking security, feeling insecure, fear of unknown

Hurt--emotional and physical pain

Grief--response to loss, pain of loss, deep sorrow

Anger--feeling of frustration, primarily linked with disease and situation

Surrogate Terms/Frequency

Insights

- Quality of relationships was one of the most affected areas for a person who is longing.
- Although associated with negative feelings, longing was also experienced as hope.
- Longing was found across many age groups and settings.
- Longing appears in instances other than illness.

Implications

Additional Research Needed:

- How does the quality of a person's relationships affect longing?
- What are the gender differences in how longing is experienced?
- In what instances is longing experienced as hope?
- Develop a nursing diagnosis to identify longing in patients.

References

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