

Kübler-Ross described the stage, “the final rest before the long journey”, as the loss of feeling and the coming of peace and acceptance. However, the Japanese concept of acceptance of death has powerful and positive implications.

In this research, the authors reviewed and analyzed Japanese writings of dying persons and health professionals who cared for them. The four components in accomplishing acceptance of death were 1) to recognize that death is imminent, 2) to focus with renewed energy on completing one’s lifework, 3) to reconcile oneself with death, and 4) to leave words of farewell and appreciation to caregivers.

The Japanese concept of acceptance of death is the final developmental stage of life. It is characterized by positive and forceful behavior accompanied by feeling of fulfillment, satisfaction and contentment.

Methods Used in Educating Nursing Students about Death and their Application to the General Public

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Some of the methods used in educating nursing students about death were investigated. The following procedures were utilized in teaching the students: (1) combined lectures and seminars, (2) television documentaries, (3) small group discussions, (4) simulation games, (5) imagining one’s own death by simple drawings.

The possibility of applying these five teaching methods to the general public was considered. Each teaching method has a few drawbacks when applied to them, but it seems possible that they can still be effective in educating lay people about death. If these methods are to be used, people involved in nursing education, such as teachers and graduates of nursing programs, should be a part of the educational process.

Palliative Care and Death at Special Nursing Homes for the Aged Women

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Palliative care prior to death for one year from April 1996 to March 1997 at 139 special nursing homes in Japan was investigated.

The total number of elderly people who received the care in these nursing institutes was 9,040 and the average of their age was 82.3 ± 2.3 . The average period of stay in the homes was 5.29 ± 4.5 years, and the number of elder people who died during the investigated period was 1,290 (14.3%), 382 men (29.6%) and 908 women (70.4%). The average of their age at death was 85.0 ± 7.9 year old (male 82.8 ± 8.2 , female 86.0 ± 7.6).

Because average life span is usually longer in female than in male, more than two thirds of the beds in these special nursing institutes are occupied by women, who were bereaved of their husbands. And most of them wish to die at these nursing institutes. These are the reasons why many of elderly women had wishes to enter the homes with special nursing. The families of these elderly people also selected the special institutes for their aging parents to receive heartfelt palliative care.

The families of these elderly women also selected the special nursing institutes for their aging mothers at terminal stage, in contrast to the families of the elderly men who selected less often the special homes for their aging fathers.