**EXPOSURE TO DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH PATIENTS AND FAMILIES, TOWARDS THE END OF LIFE: THE 3<sup>RD</sup> YEAR NURSING STUDENT EXPERIENCE.** Walsh A<sup>1</sup>, Cusack L<sup>1</sup>, Hegney D<sup>1</sup> Adelaide Nursing School, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA 5005, Australia.



#### Background

Caring for patients with a lifelimiting cancer requires the ability to clearly communicate. (1)



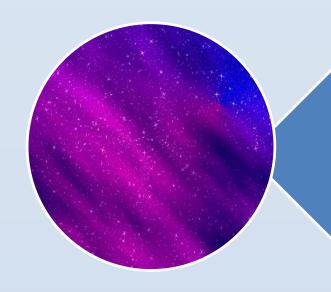
### Results

Participants were not sufficiently prepared for death and dying and the related difficult conversations.

Five themes were created that focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> year nursing student experience.



# be challenging for nursing students. (2,3)



Cancer Nurses can help prepare students for death and dying and difficult conversations.



Aim: To understand how prepared 3<sup>rd</sup> year nursing students feel to engage in difficult conversations, in the end of life context.

### Methodology and Methods

### **Major Themes**

#### Death denying culture.

- Earlier preparation to understand death and dying.
- Understand that death and dying are part of the nursing role.
- Prior personal and professional experiences of death and dying.
  - Experience can help them prepare.

**Observing RNs during clinical placement.** 

Observing RNs communication skills and abilities.

# Methodology: Qualitative descriptive research approach.

Ethical approval granted by the University.

Ten third-year undergraduate Bachelor of Nursing students consented to semi- structured interviews.

# Thematic analysis using the Braun and Clark reflexive thematic analysis approach. (4)



- Unprepared for first deaths.
- **Effective Communication.**
- Knowing what to say.
- Knowing how to respond to emotion and distress.
- Impact on self.

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- Having an awareness of impact on self.
- Coping strategies used.

## **Conclusions.**

The participants were not sufficiently prepared for death and dying and the related difficult conversations.

Cancer Nurses have a key role during clinical placement in preparing, teaching and supporting students.

Image: https://www.wallpaperflare.com/nursehelping-patient-photo-medical-senior-healthdoctor-wallpaper-azkds Preparing future nurses to engage in difficult conversations may improve the patient and family experience and assist nurses in building a skill set to engage in open and honest communication.

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- 3. Heath, L, Egan, R, Ross, J, Iosua, E, Walker, R & Macleod, R 2021, 'Preparing nurses for palliative and end of life care: A survey of New Zealand nursing schools' *Nurse Education Today*, Vol. 100, pp. 1-6.

4.Braun, V and Clarke, V 2006, 'Using thematic analysis in psychology', Qualitative Research in Psychology', Vol.3, no. 2, pp. 77-101.