Caring for dying children in an acute paediatric ward

Method
A phenomenological approach to data collection and analysis
Qualitative in-depth interviews with four HCPs

Aim
To describe caring as presented in HCPs’ experience of caring for dying children in a general acute paediatric care setting in Sweden

Background
Caring for dying children in acute paediatric care units is challenging both for the child’s relatives and for the health care professionals (HCPs)

Results
Constituents

PRESENCE
OWN SUFFERING
SELF-KNOWLEDGE
IN NEED OF OTHERS
INJUSTICE IN DYING

Essence
Caring for dying children is like a musically attuned composition. The conductor (HCP) takes responsibility for the composition so the music can reach the dying child. The atmosphere is distinguished by compassion, trust, perceptivity, courage and respect. The moments are fragile and could easily be disrupted and turn into disharmony. The conductor moves carefully, uses knowledge and struggles to be true and tuned in with the orchestra. When the child gets out of reach of the composition, it feels unfair that the child could not enjoy the music anymore.

Future
Since only the best care is good enough when a child faces death, there is a need for further investigations about the prerequisites for caring when a child is dying.

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