Photo-Voice as a Data Collection Method in ICU

Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is the place of care for the most critically ill patients. ICUs are strange and unfamiliar environment to be cared for. The patient rooms in ICU are not only a place for care, treatment and recovery but also a visiting room and a working place. Previous research emphasizes that it is a traumatic experience to be a patient in ICU, not just because of the illness per se but also because one’s human existence is threatened. Many patients suffer from unreal experiences and unpleasant memories. The next-of-kin are considered to be the link between the ICU and the world outside and bring hope for the patient and therefore important for the patients’ survival. The literature suggests that the design of ICU and presence of the next-of-kin bedside effects patient’s recovery process. This study as part of a larger research project aim to illuminate patients’ and the next-of-kin’s experiences of the ICU patient room, the design and the interiors. A photo-voice method was used. Next-of-kin and patients were invited to take photos various aspects of the room that they remembered or associated with a feeling. The pictures were used later during a research interview. Data were analyzed using phenomenological hermeneutics. This method gives the researcher opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and capture aspects of the room that otherwise might have been hidden. The presentation will focus on photography as a data collection method in lifeworld research.

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