

Advanced Practice and the Orthopaedic Nurse: An Interpretive Study

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Abstract

Advanced nursing practice is a broad topic that is often misunderstood. Related terms are used interchangeably, which tends to engender a degree of confusion over what constitutes advanced practice. The relationship of advanced practice to expert and specialty practice is unclear. Health care is increasingly becoming more complex. There are greater expectations placed upon the nurse practising in this context. Therefore the role of the nurse must reflect the increasing complexity that exists within a contemporary health system. Advanced practice provides an opportunity to debate and acknowledge how nursing practice must reflect modern trends. This study will assist in conceptualising advanced practice in terms of the nature and scope of advanced orthopaedic nurse practice.

This study aimed to uncover the meaning of the lived experiences of advanced orthopaedic nurse practitioners, thereby engaging orthopaedic nurses within the debate. The methodology employed in this study was Hermeneutic Phenomenology, informed by Heidegger and van Manen. Seven expert orthopaedic nurse practitioners were asked to describe an experience in which they believed they performed at an advanced level. Concepts and themes emerged from the narratives. Themes included: *having knowledge, being in and outside the role, being an advocate and being in control.*

Controversy and confusion dominates the debate over what constitutes advanced practice, both here and overseas. This study highlighted that advanced practice is part of a continuum that describes specialist, expert and advanced practice. It is also an important concept in contemporary nursing practice. However ongoing clarification and consistency in terminology would assist immeasurably in identifying standards of advanced practice. Once this is achieved, the impact of advanced practice on patient care can be ascertained.

Statement

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being available for loan and photocopying.

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Anita Taylor

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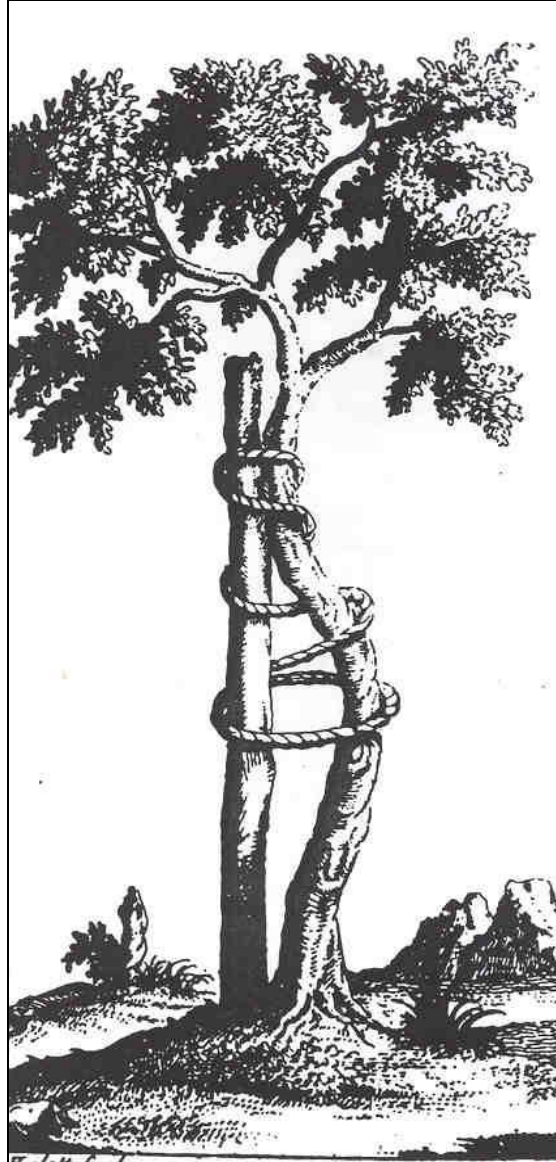
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To my darling boys Oliver and Elliot, who didn't always understand why mummy was studying, why she wasn't there or why she was so grumpy, my devotion.

To my husband Neil, who gave up his beloved golf, willingly whisked the boys off to the beach, endured the late nights and provided unerring encouragement and support, my love.

Prologue



A certain symmetry exists on one level of this thesis. The orthopaedic tree symbolises the study context. The tree of life symbolises the experiences of the participants contained in their descriptions. The tree of knowledge represents my journey and the quote from Murray Bail's Eucalyptus, which opens chapter three, alludes to the study's methodology.