

Photography as a data collection method in Intensive Care

Sepideh Olausson, doctoral student, MNSc, RN, University of Borås.

Terese Bondas, Professor, RN, University of Borås

The suffering patient is thrown into a strange and unfamiliar environment of different technological devices in an Intensive care unit. The intensive room is a place for care and treatment, for rest and recovery, a visiting room, and a working place for the staff. In this context patients and relatives are very vulnerable and are in a need of support. Patients may suffer from unreal experiences, often very traumatic during their stay in ICU and many patients also suffer from unpleasant memories, and some develop post traumatic stress after their discharge. In order to design optimal rooms in ICU it would be important to identify factors which are meaningful for the patients and relatives. The aim of this study, as part of a larger research project, is to illuminate patients' and relatives' experiences of the physical room, the design and the interior in the ICU. Photographs combined with interviews are used as data collection methods within the ICU-context. Relatives and former patients are asked to photograph different aspects of the room that they remember or associate with a feeling. The pictures were used later during an interview with the informants. In total the researcher meets the informants three times, first time to inform, the second time to take the photos and a third time for the interview. This method gives the researcher opportunity to deepen the understanding and capture aspects of the room that otherwise might have been hidden. The presentation will focus on photography as a research method.