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Introduction

In 1999, researchers from Australia studied the qualitative aspects of the blood transfusion process including informed consent, administration techniques, and appropriateness of transfusions. In this study it was realized that many patients had concerns regarding their experiences of receiving a blood transfusion. This included the information they received, how it was presented, other options that may have been available, and feelings of worry and concern post-transfusion. (Fitzgerald et al, 1999) In a review of the literature a 1991 article described a nurse's experience after receiving a blood transfusion. She describes the actual infusion as uncomfortable and the following weeks and months filled with worry that could have been reduced with more information at the time of the transfusion. Duplicating the Australian study would give nursing new insight on patient's perception and improve practice.

Methodology

Process

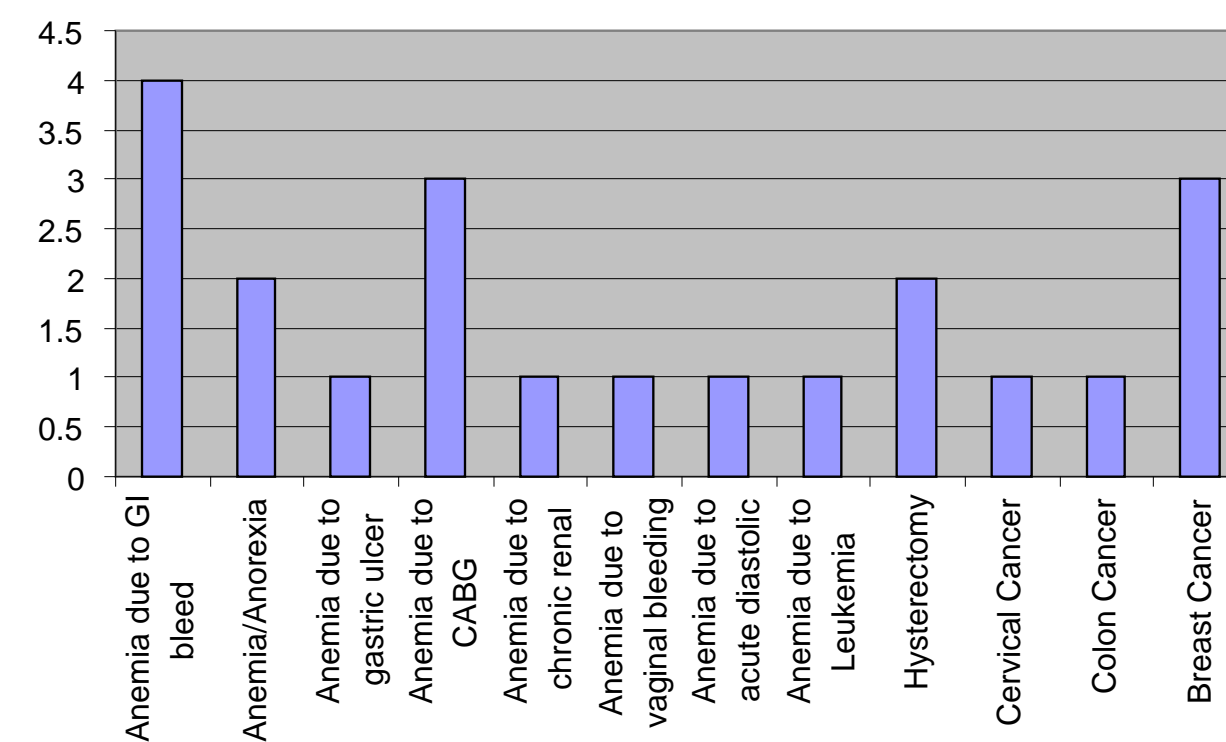
- Hermeneutical, phenomenology, interpretive study. IRB approved.
- 21 interviews completed to ensure data saturation.
- Blood bank provided daily list of in-house patients who received Packed Red Blood Cells.
- Patient was consented and the interview was audio taped. Confidentially assured.
- Transcribed verbatim for future reference.
- Data was cleaned, coded, and clustered into like themes.
- Themes that emerged were explored.
- The interviewer, data entry researcher, and data verifier were all different researchers, assuring validity, triangulation, and reflexivity of the data.

Data

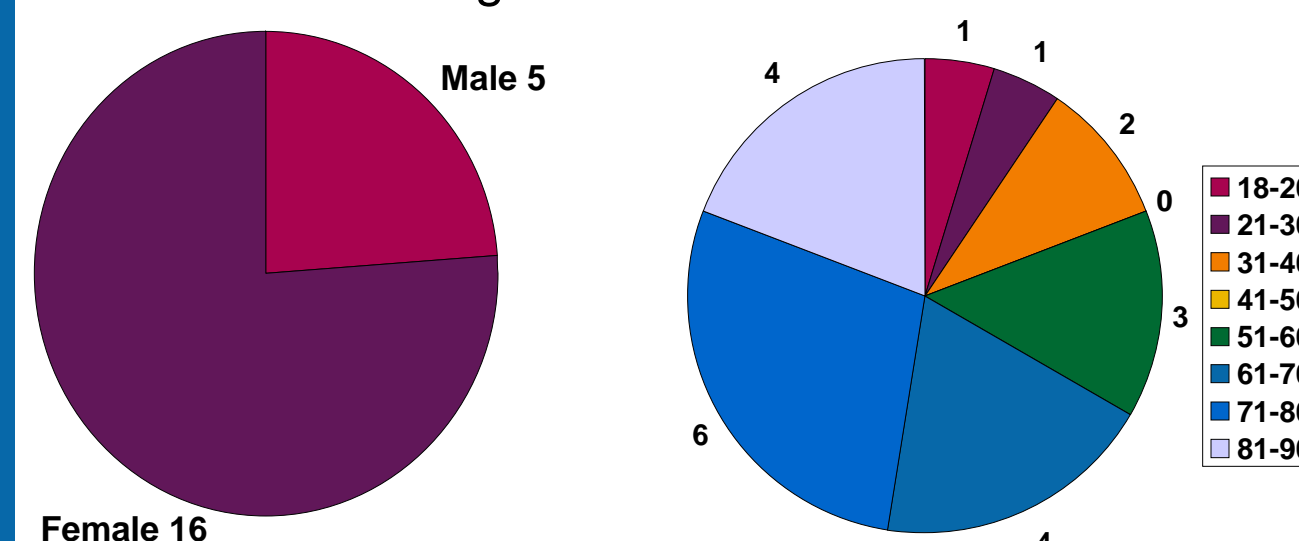
Twenty-three patients were interviewed, two were cleaned out of the data because the patients were not cognitively capable of completing the interview. Interviews were obtained on medical-surgical units and in post-partum. Patients >90 years of age were not interviewed.

The following graphs depict the demographic data obtained from the patients interviewed:

Reasons for a blood transfusion:



Age and Gender:



Race # of Patients

Caucasian	19
African American	1
Hispanic/Latino	1

Results

Five themes emerged after the data was synthesized. The following were agreed upon using triangulation of the researchers:

1. Patients stated they felt much better after the blood transfusion. **"I could tell the following morning my body felt much, much better. I had more energy, I wasn't so tired. So, it was a good feeling the next morning."**
2. Patients remain paternalistic about blood transfusions and their relationship with the physician. They did not question the need or other options available. **"If the doctor says I need it, I need it."**
3. Patients expressed a lack of knowledge and understanding about their medical condition and reason for transfusion. Risks and benefits were not mentioned, leaving the patient and their family with feelings of apprehension.

When given information about the rarity of contracting an illness by the interviewer, one spouse exclaimed, **"What you just said was prime information. If somebody would've just walked in here and said that to me, it would've put my mind to ease and I would not have went home and thought about it."**
4. Patients described feeling reassured by the close monitoring of the nursing staff at the time of the transfusion. **"In exactly 15 minutes that nurse was back in here and checking everything she was suppose to."**
5. Nurses were described as the primary resource and provider for patients regarding all aspects of a blood transfusion, more so then their physician.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of patient's described experiences, nursing can be effective by:

- Discussing alternatives to blood transfusions. Patient's trust their nurses and the information they provide.
- Discussing risks and benefits prior to the transfusion. Nursing imparts knowledge and power to patients and their information is valuable in suppressing concerns and to assist in decision making. Reviewing the blood transfusion brochure with patients personally is very helpful, according to the study results.
- Nursing has a larger role in blood transfusions as compared to the Australian study where the process is more physician driven. This confirms the perception that nurses are essential to the patient experience of a blood transfusion.

Fitzgerald, M., Hodgkinson, B., Thorp, D. (1999) Blood transfusion from the recipient's perspective. *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 8:593-600