ORIGINAL PAPER

Preparing for Care in a Combat Environment

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Abstract

Background Working as a nurse in a war zone entails providing a unique form of care, and it is important to be well prepared before and during an international assignment. To improve organized preparations it is necessary to understand how nurses previously engaged in a military mission experienced their preparations.

Objective The aim of this study is to describe military nurses’ experiences of preparations for a mission, including factors that contribute to their being meaningful.

Methodology The data comprises eight interviews with Swedish military nurses who served in Afghanistan. The results are analyzed using a qualitative content analysis. Meaning units are condensed into codes which, via subcategories, form categories. The categories are abstracted into an overall theme.

Results The results highlight the importance of recognizing challenges and making informed choices. The overall theme shows that adequate preparation promotes an accepting attitude.

Conclusions It is concluded that organized preparation for care in a combat environment should stimulate realistic reflection without entrapping one in negative thinking.

Keywords: Care in a combat environment, Military nurse, Preparations for care, Qualitative content analysis