

## 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