

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter will discuss the background, problem formulation, research objectives and research questions. This chapter is the reason for doing this research.

### 1.1 Background

The Latin term "*spiritus*", which means "breath" or "something that is in the body and gives life force," is the origin of the concept of spirituality (Doreen, 2016). Various interpretations of spirituality brought fundamental questions regarding life's meaning, purpose, and satisfaction (Levison et al., 2009). Several interrelated spiritual themes were identified, namely the importance of faith, a source of strength and comfort, finding purpose in helping others, personal connections, and perspectives on disability (Baldwin et al., 2015). Spiritual care is a treatment that identifies and responds to a patient's needs when facing trauma, illness, or grief (Miller et al., 2023). Spiritual care focuses on paying attention to the patient's deep inner concerns and existential questions, encouraging them to express themselves and listen with an open and non-judgmental attitude as the patient shares their beliefs and traditions (Cone & Giske, 2022).

As the frontline, nurses who deal with human beings have an important responsibility to address patients' spiritual care needs. However, there were some barriers experienced by nurses in providing spiritual care services to patients, such as lack of knowledge, limitations in time and appropriate environment, distrust of team members, lack of language understanding, the existence of a 'culture of denial of death', confusion between religion and spirituality, difficulty in providing answers that can lead to avoidance, fear of offending, concerns in conveying a poor prognosis, skills lack of communication, as well as fear of personal emotions

(Martis, 2021). A similar study also mentioned that time constraints and availability due to excessive workloads are considered barriers to providing spiritual care (Anshasi et al., 2024). Further, for these reasons, (Sinaga et al., 2021) claimed that most nurses did not get spiritual care lessons during the nurse training process.

Oshvandi et al., (2020) believed that spiritual care can increase hope. In addition, spiritual care can benefit mental health and quality of life (Zhang et al., 2024). Another benefit of spiritual care is to increase patients' peace of mind and comfort (Tavares et al., 2022a). Rachmawati & Aristina (2022) stated that spiritual care provided by nurses can increase patient motivation and facilitate their recovery based on a statement from one of the respondents who emphasized that healing requires more than just treatment; healing also involves prayer encouragement, which emphasizes that support is fundamental. A study conducted in Canada by Bone et al. (2018) on 25 ICU nurses found that some nurses have provided spiritual care to patients and their families through their presence in 3 ways: intention, together with the patient or family, and empathy.

Faculty of Nursing UPH already has spiritual care subject in the nursing curriculum. This subject is provided in the first year of the nursing program. This course is an introduction to the basis of spiritual care in health care. This course discusses health and illness from a Biblical perspective and introduces several models related to spiritual care. In this subject, students are taught to reflect on their spirituality and demonstrate skills in assessing and conducting spiritual interventions. During clinical exposure, the researcher had the opportunity to care for a patient with terminal cancer. The interaction with this patient provided a profound experience on the importance of spiritual care. While accompanying the patient who often felt anxious and fearful, the researcher realized that emotional and spiritual support is just as important as medical care. A genuine conversation with the patient, where the researcher listens empathetically to the patient's concerns and hopes, creates a strong bond. The patient's request for prayers, despite being of a different religion, was a touching moment and confirmed that spiritual care transcends boundaries of faith. This experience shows that spiritual care not only

provides comfort to patients but also gives nurses the satisfaction of providing holistic support. This strongly shows that providing spiritual care to patients during clinical exposure provides valuable insights for nursing students. As mentioned in one earlier study, exploring nurses' experiences in delivering spiritual care in different settings would be necessary (Anshasi et al., 2024). This study is important to bring some experiences and feelings that may also cover challenges and opportunities faced by students in providing spiritual care. Thus, this study is going to explore nursing students' experiences in providing spiritual care during clinical exposures.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Spiritual care is a crucial aspect of nursing, addressing patients' needs when facing trauma, illness, or grief. It focuses on addressing patients' deep inner concerns and existential questions, encouraging them to express themselves and listen with an open and non-judgmental attitude. However, barriers to providing spiritual care services include lack of knowledge, time constraints, and excessive workloads. The Faculty of Nursing UPH offers spiritual care subjects in the nursing curriculum, introducing the basis of spiritual care in health care. This course discusses health and illness from a Biblical perspective and introduces models related to spiritual care. Students are taught to reflect on their spirituality and demonstrate skills in assessing and conducting spiritual interventions. This knowledge gap indicates an urgent need to better understand how nursing students provide spiritual care to patients during their clinical exposures. Further, this study will specifically target nursing students, whereas some previous studies focus on professional nurses. Thus, the researcher is going to investigate the experiences of nursing students in providing spiritual care during clinical exposures.

## **1.3 Aim of the Study**

To explore nursing students' experiences in providing spiritual care during

clinical exposures.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

What are the experiences of nursing students in providing spiritual care to patients during clinical exposures?

#### **1.5 Research Benefits**

The benefits of research consist of two parts, namely theoretical benefits and practical benefits.

##### **1.5.1 Theoretical Benefits**

This research will make an important contribution in the field of nursing, especially in terms of providing spiritual care to patients. By exploring the experiences of nursing students in providing spiritual care, this research can help enrich nursing literature related to spiritual aspects in health services. The results of this study can also be the basis for the development of new theories related to the provision of spiritual care in the clinical environment.

##### **1.5.2 Practical Benefits**

By exploring the nursing students' experience in providing spiritual care, nursing education institutions can improve their clinical practice curriculum and training. This can help nursing students to be more prepared and skilled in providing spiritual care to patients. In addition, the results of this study can also provide valuable insights for nursing practitioners and other health workers in improving the quality of holistic health services and oriented to the spiritual needs of patients.