

A phenomenological study of the lived experiences of elderly individuals with chronic wounds

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Abstract

Purpose – This paper aims to explore the lived experience of people with a chronic non-healing wound and to explore what it means to live with a chronic wound.

Design/methodology/approach – A descriptive phenomenological study design was adopted to explore the living experience of person with chronic wound. A sample of 15 individuals of both genders was selected using a purposive sampling technique. To collect data, in-depth interviews were conducted, and all the interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. Data were analysed using the seven-step process described by Colaizzi (1978).

Findings – The findings were organized into 6 themes clusters and 12 themes. The six themes clusters were limiting mobility; receiving care; explaining causes of wounds; contending with chronic illnesses; adapting and mal-adapting; and economic burden of the wound.

Research limitations/implications – Chronic wound had a profound impact on participants' lives by affecting their activities of daily living, their mobility, their income and their personal relationships.

Originality/value – Understanding the lived experiences of people with chronic wounds is crucial for health-care providers, including nurses. Investigating the chronic wound experience has become even more pressing given the projected increase in the number of elderly individuals and those with chronic illnesses such as diabetes mellitus. In Jordan, for example, the prevalence of diabetes mellitus is 17.1%, and it is projected to increase by 2050.

Keywords Phenomenology, Experience, Chronic wound, Theme

Paper type Research paper

(Information about the authors can be found at the end of this article.)

Introduction

The process of wound healing is a complex and dynamic one that involves a series of interconnected events. The failure of a wound to heal within three to four weeks or after trying conventional treatments is considered a chronic wound (Frykberg and Banks, 2015). Chronic wounds represent a significant health-care problem worldwide, affecting millions of people and causing considerable morbidity and mortality (Boulton *et al.*, 2020). The aging process and chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes mellitus (DM) are two of the many causes of chronic wounds, as they compromise the body's ability to heal itself (Boulton *et al.*, 2020; Fonder *et al.*, 2008). Other factors that contribute to chronic wounds include neuropathy, poor circulation and difficulties moving (Snyder, 2005).

Chronic wounds have a substantial impact on patients, health-care providers and the overall health-care system. They can be painful, cause significant emotional suffering and place a physical strain on patients and their families (Renner and Erfurt-Berge, 2017).

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