



Patient-centred nursing,  
compassion satisfaction and  
compassion fatigue in  
Australian intensive care units

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A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## **Certificate of original authorship**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

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Date: 16<sup>th</sup> April 2018

## **Statement of contributions to jointly authored works within this thesis**

This thesis contains published work and work that has been submitted for publication or is currently under peer review (Chapters Two, Three, Five, Six and Seven). Justification for choice of journal and journal characteristics are outlined in Appendix 2.

Primarily I have been responsible for determining the research questions, managing data collection, analysis and drafting manuscripts. Professor Lin Perry and Doctor Joanne Lewis have provided valuable advice and also been involved in data synthesis, interpretation and manuscript editing.

I take full responsibility for the accuracy of information and findings presented in this thesis.

## **Publications and presentations related to this thesis**

- Jakimowicz, S. & Perry, L. 2015, 'A concept analysis of patient-centred nursing in the intensive care unit', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, vol. 71, no. 7, pp. 1499-517.
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- Jakimowicz, S., Perry, L. & Lewis, J. 2017, 'Compassion satisfaction and fatigue: A cross-sectional survey of Australian intensive care nurses', *Australian Critical Care*, vol. 30, no. 2, pp 127 (online).

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- Jakimowicz, S. & Perry, L. 2015, 'A concept analysis of patient-centred nursing in ICU', paper presented to the *Australian College of Nursing National Nursing Forum*, Brisbane, QLD.
- Jakimowicz, S., Perry, L. & Lewis, J. 2015, 'Barriers or facilitators to patient-centred nursing in intensive care', paper presented to the *ANZICS/ACCCN Intensive Care Annual Scientific Meeting*, Auckland, New Zealand.

- Jakimowicz, S, Perry, L. & Lewis, J. 2015 An integrative review of facilitators and barriers to patient-centred nursing in the intensive care unit – paper presented to the *ANZICS/ACCCN Annual Scientific Meeting*, Auckland, New Zealand.
- Jakimowicz, S. & Perry, L. 2014, Patient-centred nursing in the intensive care unit: a concept analysis. *ANZICS/ACCCN Intensive Care Annual Scientific Meeting*, Melbourne, VIC. *Poster presentation*.

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- Jakimowicz, S., Perry, L. & Lewis, J. 2017, 'Compassionate patient-centred nursing in Australian intensive care units', paper presented to *Nursing Research Forum, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District*, Wollongong Hospital.
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- Jakimowicz, S., Perry, L. & Lewis, J. 2015, Barriers or facilitators to patient-centred nursing in intensive care, paper presented to *Nursing Research Forum, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District*, Wollongong Hospital.
- Jakimowicz, S. & Perry, L. 2014, Patient-centred nursing in the intensive care unit: a concept analysis paper presented to *Nursing Research Forum, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District*, Wollongong Hospital.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to Michael.

He is my inspiration.

His belief in me has taken me on a journey ~ introducing me to the world of learning.

I did not graduate from high school but have completed

not one degree, but three

and now submitting a Doctoral Thesis for examination.

Because of him I have been able to travel this learning pathway.



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## Glossary of Terms

Abbreviation	In Full	Definition
<b>General</b>		
BFST	Bowen Family Systems Theory	An existing theory that focuses on patterns within a family/group with a goal of diffusing anxiety and increasing individual empowerment
BO	Burnout	Exhaustion, physically, cognitively and emotionally as a result of chronic stress or frustration
CF	Compassion fatigue	A combination of secondary traumatic stress and burnout
CS	Compassion satisfaction	The pleasure derived from alleviating others' suffering and completing your work the best you can
CCN	Critical care nurse/nursing	A registered nurse working or qualified to work in an intensive care or high dependency unit
	Differentiation of self	The ability to respond intellectually rather than react emotionally to any given situation
	Emotional Cut-off	Where an individual may become distant, disengaged as a consequence of emotional 'stuckness'.
	Emotional process	The way individuals within a group may react to chronic anxiety
	Family	Broadly refers to those close to the patient, or who the patient considers family, significant other, next of kin, relative or close friend
	Family System	A family system – a system of interrelated variables or in this case a system of interrelated people
HDU	High Dependency Unit	A ward within a hospital that cares for critically ill patients requiring one-to-two nursing care
ICU	Intensive Care Unit	A ward within a hospital that cares for critically ill patients requiring one-to-one nursing care
	Patient	An individual requiring medical treatment in a hospital setting – in the case of this thesis, an intensive care unit

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>In Full</b>	<b>Definition</b>
	Patient / Person	'Patient' and 'person' are used interchangeably throughout literature; with patient appearing more often in papers addressing critical care. For consistency, 'patient' is used throughout this program of work as the definition of patient refers to a 'person'.
PFCC	Patient and Family Centred Care	A model of care where the patient and family are treated as one
PCN	Patient-centred nursing	A model of care where the patient is the focus, not the disease
STS	Secondary Traumatic Stress	Emotional distress resulting from repeated exposure to direct trauma of another individual
	System conflict	Developing conflict from competing needs of the elements of a family system
	Triangling	A configuration of three individuals within a relationship
<b>Methodology</b>		
CCA	Constant Comparative Analysis	Revisiting data, going back over data collection. Simultaneous collection, coding and analysis of data with the aim of generating theory
	Theoretical sampling	A process of deduction to verify the category properties. Revisiting data, going back over data collection with a different perspective.
	Structuralism	A theoretical perspective that views social behaviour and culture as a communication code. Behaviour and culture may be communicated through non-verbal and verbal coding.
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences	Software used in statistical analysis and data management
NVivo	NVivo	Software used in qualitative data analysis and management
<b>Miscellaneous</b>		
ACCCN	Australian College of Critical Care Nurses	Australian regulatory body of critical care nurses
JAN	Journal of Advanced Nursing	An international peer reviewed journal
JCN	Journal of Clinical Nursing	An international peer reviewed journal
ACC	Australian Critical Care	A peer reviewed journal

## **Abstract**

### ***Aim***

To develop a conceptual framework outlining processes involved in patient-centred nursing and compassion satisfaction or compassion fatigue in the context of critical care nursing.

### ***Background***

The aggressive curative setting of intensive care may compromise elements of patient-centred nursing. Critical care nurses are *expected* to employ bio-medical nursing expertise while delivering compassionate nursing care to critically ill patients; they are at high risk of anxiety and fatigue with no assurance their patients will recover despite their best efforts. Compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue influence nurses' intention to leave; workforce turnover is high.

### ***Methods***

Mixed method research using an explanatory sequential design together with constructivist methodology was adopted. A concept analysis defined patient-centred nursing in context and an integrative literature review examined barriers and facilitators to patient-centred nursing in intensive care. A cross-sectional survey collected data from nurses of two adult Australian intensive care units measuring compassion satisfaction and fatigue. Grounded theory methods were employed to examine critical care nurses' experience of compassion satisfaction, compassion fatigue and patient-centred nursing. In a novel approach to the discovery of new knowledge, Bowen Family Systems Theory was applied to intensive care nursing. Data were integrated at various points using a constructivist paradigm contributing to conceptual development.

## ***Findings***

Patient-centred nursing in intensive care is different to other areas of healthcare. The critical care environment and complex challenges faced by critical care nurses were found to compromise their ability to provide effective patient-centred nursing. Overall, critical care nurses had mid-range levels of compassion satisfaction and fatigue. Workplace, education, tenure, age and experience were found to be predictive and contributing factors to compassion satisfaction and fatigue. Early to mid-career critical care nurses were at greatest risk. The experience of compassion satisfaction or fatigue impacts the ability to deliver compassionate patient-centred nursing. Moments of compassion satisfaction and fatigue may occur along a continuum, keeping time with critical care nurses' expectations being met and their ability to meet perceived expectations. Bowen Family Systems Theory, when applied to intensive care nursing identified possible strategies to assist critical care nurses' provision of patient-centred nursing. Findings from each subsection of this program of work were brought together, contributing to the development of the conceptual framework comprising five levels: workplace, expectations, differentiation, patient-centred nursing and compassion. Existing knowledge and new knowledge is threaded through the framework.

## ***Conclusion***

This innovative approach resulted in new insights into processes surrounding patient-centred nursing, compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue in intensive care nursing. Applying Bowen Family Systems Theory to intensive care nursing resulted in new knowledge and recommendations to develop workplace culture and enhance critical care nurses' compassion satisfaction.

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