ABSTRACT

Koslander, Tiburtius (2011) The Communion of the Light - shaping of spiritual dimension in the caritative caring

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The overall aim of this study is to achieve a deeper understanding of patients’ religious nature and spiritual dimension with regard to its ontological meaning and its various manifestations in the light of the caring science perspective. It also aims to develop a theoretical conceptual model focusing on the place or role of human being’s spiritual dimension in health care, in general, and in the mental health care context, in particular. The study is based on two questions: How can the spiritual dimension and its manifestations be understood in ontological and contextual terms? How can a theoretical model with focus on the human being’s spiritual dimension in health care, in general, and in the mental health care, in particular, be constructed? The study uses phenomenographic and hermeneutic research approaches for the analysis of qualitative data. For a deeper comprehensive understanding of human being’s spirituality, a theological interpretive framework based on Paul Tillich’s theology is used.

The results of the four sub-studies are the following: The necessity of an ethical reflection on and a deeper understanding of patients' spiritual needs in mental health care. The caregiver find it difficult to address man’s spiritual dimension. The different meanings of the spiritual manifestations in the patient show that they are i.e. either good or bad for her or him. The positive significance of the patient’s spiritual manifestations brings her or him holiness and to God. On the contrary, the negative meanings of the experience of spirituality draws the patient from God and holiness, which forces both to take power over the patient and to destroy her/his entire existence. The study ends with a theoretical model, called “The Communion of the light”, which describes the concept of claritas in caring community with a caring cultur. The model underscores that caregivers should show recognition of and understanding for the patient's religious nature and her or his spiritual dimension which manifests itself either in positive or negative spiritual manifestations.

Keywords: spirituality, spiritual dimension, caring science, hermeneutics, phenomenography, mental health care.