



Beyond Treatment: A Scoping Review of Pediatric Nursing Competencies in Palliative Care

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Introduction

Pediatric palliative care (PPC) is an essential field, with an estimated 21 million children worldwide in need of these services³. As the demand for PPC continues to grow, healthcare providers must develop specialized competencies to ensure comprehensive care.² End-of-life (EOL) care in PPC goes beyond managing physical symptoms—it also involves addressing emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs. To fulfill the nursing role effectively, it is crucial to identify the core competencies required to enhance the quality of life for both pediatric patients and their families.⁽³⁻⁶⁾

Research Question:

«What competencies are necessary for the pediatric nurse in care for children where disease-oriented treatment has been discontinued? A scoping review»

Method

This study followed Arksey & O'Malley's⁷ framework and the first two synthesis steps from Thomas & Harden.⁸

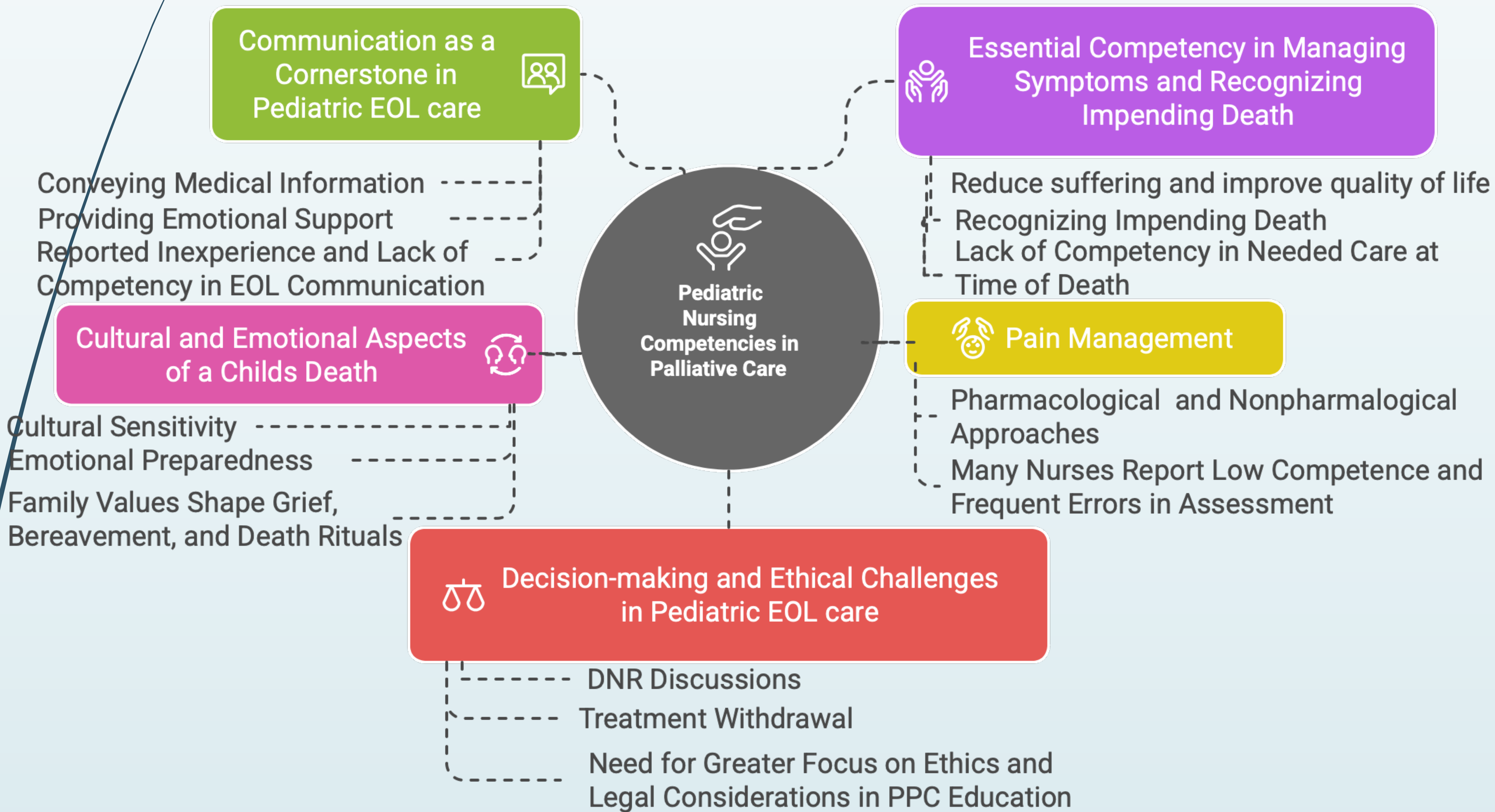
Context:

- Pediatric medical wards & intensive care units
- Excluded: Hospice care & traumatic causes of impending death

Screening Process:

- Identified citations: 1,217
- Duplicates removed: 748
- Studies screened: 470 (+1 from citation search)
- Full-text reviewed: 86
- Final inclusion: 7 studies⁽¹⁴⁻²⁰⁾

RESULTS



Conclusion

Globally, 21 million children require PPC making enhanced EOL care competencies crucial for nurses to provide confident and high-quality care. This scoping review identifies key competency gaps in pediatric EOL care and highlights five essential themes for competency development:

- Communication
- Symptom management and recognizing death
- Pain management
- Cultural and emotional aspects
- Ethical decision-making

Rather than focusing solely on pedagogical strategies, educational efforts should prioritize these critical themes to ensure that nurses are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge. Standardized training programs are essential to prepare nurses for providing compassionate, competent, and holistic care, ultimately improving both clinical practice and patient-family experiences.

