

## Summary of the PhD Dissertation

Name	Dario Valcarenghi
University	EOC – Bellinzona, Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland
Place	Bellinzona
Name of supervisor	Franco Carnevale PhD, MA, BSc, MEd, MSc, RN Ingram School of Nursing, McGill University,
Year of completion	2016
Contact	dario.valcarenghi@eoc.ch

### *Curriculum Vitae*

Dario Valcarenghi, PhD, MSN, RN.  
Previous experiences in clinical, educational and managerial fields in Italy and currently head of the Nursing Development and Research Office of the Oncology Institute of Southern Switzerland (IOSI) and of the Nursing Research Centre of the Ente Ospedaliero Cantonale (EOC) - Bellinzona - Canton Ticino.



### *Description of the project*

#### **Exploring the interaction between nursing decision-making and patient outcomes in two European Cancer Centres: a qualitative study**

In some clinical settings, nurses still have difficulty in describing the outcomes of their caring activities. Understanding the reasons for this could help nurse leaders to improve the effectiveness and visibility of nursing practice, and safeguard nurses' working conditions.

For the present study we used the grounded theory methodology, defined as a 'systematic, inductive, and comparative approach to conduct studies that aim at building a theory or a conceptual framework' (Charmaz, 2006). The purpose of our study was not limited to the description of the phenomenon, but also to its interpretation through a circular process, including data collection and interpretation.

We involved 15 clinical cancer nurses with different experiences and educational backgrounds and 6 nurse managers, working in two comprehensive cancer centres, one in Italy and one in Switzerland. Data were collected in two phases using semi-structured interviews (n° 20) and observations on the field (n° 9).

Through a data coding process, six macro-categories emerged: interacting with situational factors, deciding relevant interventions, using multiple decision-making approaches, evaluating interventions and reporting them, pursuing healthcare outcomes, clarifying professional identity and roles. The six macro-categories we identified belonged to professional and situational factors,

which were a dialectically and dynamically related with one another. They tended to strike a balance that could be changed by intervening on one of the relationship factors. An important aspect of the present study was the great variety of the professional situations we observed in the two clinical settings, both in terms of the type of decision-making processes they adopted, and of the way of assessing the outcomes of their decisions on patients. A possible explanation for these differences can be found by placing the professional identity (whether weak or strong) of the nursing team at the centre of the analysis and by reflecting on the possible interactions, dynamics, and dialectics that the nursing team establishes with various factors that belong to the context in which the team works (patients, other professionals, health institution, local ethical and social-political culture). This process was interpreted using an explicative theory called 'dynamic decision-making adaptation'. On the basis of the proposed theory, nurses can influence the environment in which they work by gaining a level of nursing expertise that proves effective in resolving patients' problems, with a clear idea of what nursing is. This should also be the aim nursing researchers and educators should pursue to change and adapt professional education to nursing contents and methods that are clear, easy to communicate, and feasible. Advanced nursing practice requires decisional accountability based on effective actions and on knowledge validated by evidence, and debate among peers.

## References

- Benner, P., Hughes, R. G., & Sutphen, M. (2008). Clinical Reasoning, Decision making, and Action: Thinking Critically and Clinically. In R. G. Hughes (Ed.), *Patient Safety and Quality: An Evidence-Based Handbook for Nurses* (Chapter 6). Rockville, MD: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality.
- Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practice Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Doran, D. M. (2013). *Nursing outcomes: gli esiti sensibili alle cure infermieristiche* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Italiana). Milano: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Müller-Staub, M., Lavin, M. A., Needham, I., van Achterberg, T. (2006). Nursing diagnoses, interventions and outcomes - application and impact on nursing practice: systematic review. *J Adv Nurs*. 56(5), 514-531.
- Strauss, A., Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Valcarengi, D., Bagnasco, A., Aleo, G., Catania, G., Zanini, M., Cavaliere, B., Carnevale, F., Sasso, L. (2018). Exploring the interaction between nursing decision making and patient outcomes in 2 european cancer centers. A qualitative study. *Cancer Nurs.*, 41(5), E40-E49. doi: 10.1097/NCC.0000000000000490.

*Other references in the published article*