



# Spiritual comfort in nursing: A concept analysis

Ana Tavares<sup>1</sup>, Helga Martins<sup>1</sup>, Sílvia Caldeira<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Student, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Institute of Health Sciences, Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health, Lisbon.

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Health Sciences, Center for Interdisciplinary Research in Health, Lisbon.

**Keywords:** Nursing, Spiritual comfort, Concept analysis.

7th European Conference on Religion, Spirituality and Health  
 27-28 May 2021



## Background

Spirituality is recognized as a fundamental dimension of life and represents a broad concept that is described as subjective and multidimensional. Different barriers are known on bringing spirituality into nursing practice. One barrier concerns nurses' difficulty in defining spirituality and related concepts because of their subjectivity (Rushton, 2014). Although the spiritual dimension of comfort is explicit in Kolcaba's Comfort Theory, the concept keeps mainly associated with promoting physical care (Pinto, Caldeira, Martins & Rodgers, 2017). In this sense, the concept of spiritual comfort may require exclusive theoretical definitions aiming clear and effective nursing intervention in this domain.

**Aim:** To provide a clear definition of the concept spiritual comfort in nursing care.

## Method

- Concept analysis study based on Beth Rodger's evolutionary model.
- **Search on electronic databases:** MEDLINE, CINAHL, Academic Search Complete, Scopus and SciELO on may 2020
- **Search terms:** 'spiritual' AND 'comfort'
- **Inclusion Criteria:** articles in English, Spanish and Portuguese language, and no time filter was used
- **Records identified through initial search:** 34
- **Records included in the review:** 4

## Results



## Discussion and Conclusion

Spiritual comfort is defined as an immediate state and an outcome, which establishes spiritual comfort as a goal from nursing interventions. Despite no clear definition of the concept has been found in literature, spiritual needs seem to have implications for patients' comfort needs. However, this concept is still underdeveloped and slightly operationalized in clinical practice. Pinto, Caldeira and Martins (2016) found difficult to define and operationalize comfort, despite being a fundamental need of human life and a vital concept in nursing care and philosophy. These authors underline that many definitions of comfort do not include the spiritual dimension, and this can be a reductionist approach of the concept since comfort needs to be embraced in a holistic perspective. This concept analysis allowed identifying the attributes of spiritual comfort concept and provides a definition that may facilitate the implementation of spirituality in clinical practice, but further studies are needed to understand the phenomenon as lived by patients and as provided by nurses.

## References