A Good Death in Individuals with Cancer: A Concept Analysis
Marie Briggs BSN, RN, CHPN
Loyola University of Chicago Marcella Niehoff School of Nursing

Significance
- In 2017, there were 599,108 cancer deaths in the US making it the second leading cause of death.¹
- A good death is the ultimate goal of hospice and palliative care
- What constitutes a good death?
- Difficult topic for many to discuss
- Medical advances = fighting mentality
- People’s previous experiences with death affect their attitude toward their own death²,³

Method
Analysis Method:
- Dynamic and interdisciplinary concept
- Rodgers’ evolutionary method

Literature Search:
- Databases searched= Pubmed and Scopus
- Search terms= “good death” AND “terminal cancer” AND “attitude to death”
- Results were limited to English language and from 2013 to present
- More articles were identified by reviewing the reference lists from selected articles
- 22 articles were reviewed

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avery Weisman (1988)⁴</td>
<td>“a death one might choose, had one a choice. It means dying in the best possible way, not only retaining vestiges of what made life important and valuable, but surviving with personal significance and self-esteem, along with minimal distress and few intractable symptoms, as long as possible”</td>
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<td>Institute of Medicine (1998)⁵</td>
<td>“free from avoidable distress and suffering for patients, families, and caregivers; in general accord with patients’ and families’ wishes; and reasonably consistent with clinical, cultural, and ethical standards”</td>
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Derived definition:
A good death is a highly personal experience, the circumstances of which are determined by each individual and are carried out with the support of loved ones and care providers.

Defining Attributes
- Highly individual
- Influenced by many factors including culture, religion, values, previous life experience, and attitude toward death⁶
- Specific preferences are numerous
- Meier describes 11 core categories⁷
- Yun indentified 10 categories of preference⁸
- Specific attributes can be divided into broader categories to encompass all individuals

Preparation
- Saying goodbye
- Finances
- Funeral arrangements
- Shift in life focus

Relationships
- Family
- Friends
- Healthcare providers
- Online

Autonomy
- Physical independence
- Decision making
- Euthanasia

Comfort
- Physical
- Psychological
- Spiritual
- Environmental
- Emotional

Implications for Research and Practice
- Lack of nursing theory guiding research on this topic
- Continue qualitative research with patients themselves
- Compare patient perspectives with those of the bereaved and the healthcare team
- Evaluate the bereaved long term to assess the impact of their experience with death on their own mental health and attitude toward death