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PAPERS

Nurturing Spirituality in Healthcare Chaplaincy



Time pressure, chaplains' spirituality and ongoing formation

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In chaplaincy literature and training, we learn about the relevance of nurturing the own spirituality, reading, following conferences and participating in activities that contribute to the own professionalism and spirituality. But: do chaplains have time for nurturing their spirituality? Is this considered as part of their job by themselves and by others? We will shortly present empirical results on time allocation of chaplains in Flanders. Recent attention in research towards taxonomy of chaplaincy inspired us to do study on chaplains' work. We used the research of the chaplains of Advocate Health Care in Chicago (2014) as a basis to create a list of tasks that would be given to Flemish hospital chaplains. These chaplains were asked to value each task and to record the time chaplains dedicated to each in a time frame of ten working days. Chaplains were then required to report their activities in an online schedule. Results show that chaplains value patient-related tasks most and also attribute most of their time to it. There is a difference however between the time they would like to spend with patients and the actual time they do so. This is especially the case in relation to nurturing the own spirituality and time for ongoing formation. We will discuss the results of this survey in light of practical theological reflections on spirituality and self-care.