

***UNDERSTANDING TECHNOLOGY IN  
CONTEMPORARY SURGICAL NURSING:  
A PHENOMENOGRAPHIC EXAMINATION***

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## ABSTRACT

Technology is important to nursing, health care and society and the experience and understanding of the phenomenon in nursing needs to be described better. The purpose of this research is to identify and describe the qualitatively different ways technology is understood and experienced by contemporary surgical nurses. A review of the literature indicated that there is limited research published investigating technology in nursing and no available research investigating the qualitatively different ways in which surgical nurses experience and understand the phenomenon. The literature lacks conceptual mastery of the phenomenon, relies on commonplace assumptions and arguments, and is unaware of opinion and debate regarding the experience of technology in disciplines outside the domain of nursing. Assertions concerning the experience of technology in nursing are unsubstantiated. The literature is dominated by claims which are reflective less of scholarly debate than they are of an underlying technological imperative and desire to advance nursing through involvement with machinery and equipment.

In order to describe the experience of technology as it is experienced and understood by nurses, a phenomenographic approach was chosen. Phenomenography describes from a second order perspective, reflected understanding of the experience of phenomenon. Twenty (20) nurses currently working in surgical nursing practice were interviewed individually. Conversations were recorded through the use of drawings and audiotape. Drawings and audiotapes were transcribed verbatim and were analysed using a series of seven (7) analytical steps. There were two (2) major outcomes of the research: eight (8) categories of description were revealed and each one constitutes a conception of the experience and understanding of technology, and an outcome space portraying the logical relations between conceptions was identified. The categories of description revealed that the phenomenon of technology in contemporary surgical nursing was experienced as: *machinery and equipment; changes to skills; increasing knowledge; respect and autonomy; gaining control of clinical practice; clinical resources of the practice environment must meet the needs of technology; the need to include the patients' experience and clinical presentation and alteration to the free will of nurses*. On the basis of conceptions revealed by this research, implications for surgical nursing are discussed and recommendations are made in relation to the theory, practice and education of nurses.

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## STATEMENT OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

**The work contained in this thesis has not been submitted previously for a degree or diploma at any tertiary educational institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another author except where due reference is made.**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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