Abstract

Objective: To describe and analyze the experiences and perceptions of disease in a group of patients with chronic pain and their accompanying relatives. Materials and Methods: Qualitative ethnographic-type research in 2007 at the Pain Clinic and Palliative Care Service of the General Hospital of Mexico. Observation and in-depth interviews were conducted with five patients and five accompanying family members. Axis methodological exploration: a metaphor of hell. Results: We observed that the experience of chronic pain, illness, and disability are problematic phenomena conditioned by cultural values, norms, practices, religious beliefs, family interaction, and hospital care. Conclusions: It is important to approach the understanding of chronic pain as a public health phenomenon within a specific cultural context. The metaphor of hell as a methodological guide revealed that in the experience of pain, cancer is established in the symbolism of hell, while allowing observation the experiences, problems, and contradictions of hospital care and the role of family members in care of the sick.

Keywords

Pain measurement, Pain intractable, Pain clinics.