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Compassion in Jewish, Christian and Secular Nursing. A Systematic Comparison of a Key Concept of Nursing

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Abstract:

Background

The topos of the Compassionate God is a dominant motive of the Jewish and Christian traditions. It is relevant for nursing because it asks the nurse to imitate God so as to become God-like. Also, to think that God suffers with the suffering believers is thought to give comfort to them. Because in the western world the topos of the Compassionate God represents the basis of the ethics of compassion/caring, this piece of basic research is important for clinical practice. This study explores to what extent Jewish and Christian nursing adhered to the biblical topos of the Compassionate God at different periods and in different cultural contexts.

Method

A mixed methods approach was used. It included variations of hermeneutical text analysis as used in historical, philosophical, theological, science of religion, and nursing research.

Results

The analysis of the literary sources shows that the topos of the Compassionate God was interpreted differently in different cultural contexts. However, at all times it directed religious and secular nursing. Since the beginning of the 21st century it builds the core of "compassionate caring" as propagated by North American nursing science.

Conclusions

The topos of the Compassionate God laid the foundation of the tradition of the ethics of compassion in nursing. More research is required to learn whether it also plays a role in Islamic nursing.

Keywords:

[Compassion](#) . [Caring](#) . [Religious and secular nursing](#) . [Nursing ethics](#)

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