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Something different

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Dear colleagues,

My name is Athena Delidaki and I work as the supervisor nurse of "Agioli Anargyroi" Hospital's Homecare Nursing Department. I have been involved in homecare nursing since 1993 (22 years till now).

My daily program includes scheduled appointments in order to provide nursing care, deliver medication, take blood samples, control and take care of wounds, ulcers, stomia etc.

Every Monday detailed weekly schedule is programmed and if necessary emergency appointments are added on. Staff transportation is made by official cars, fully equipped with all the necessary medical materials.

Homecare nursing is not just "nursing" but also giving psychological support. In the following lines an indicative example that I personally experienced will be described to make things crystal clear.

"According to my weekly schedule, I had to visit a young woman for the first time. She was nearly 30 years old and suffered from breast cancer with multiple ulcers at the final-stage.

We were about in the same age and I have to confess that I was a little bit troubled about this as I was heading to her house. When the door opened, I came face to face with two adorable children of the same age with mine (5 & 6 years old). They escorted me to their mother's room but they refused leaving us alone. After great effort I managed to persuade them to leave the room and so to be able to treat my patient properly.

At that point, I faced a crucial situation. Not only had she suffered from a big ulcer at the coccyx area, but also from lots of necrotic tissues. Directly, I recommended her to visit a hospital as soon as possible to get the appropriate surgical debridement. Her denial was no surprise to me. She knew that her life would soon come to an end inevitably and preferred not to waste a single second away from her little ones.

There was no time for second thoughts, I started the debridement myself, treated the rest of the ulcers and proceeded the rest of her medication.

My part as a nurse was almost coming to an end while I was trying to pull myself together and leave. On my way to the main door, the children frantically run to me, grabbed my legs and stopped my way out. For an instant, I couldn't catch my breath as their voices came to my ears begging me to cure their one and only beloved mother. Until that moment I didn't know I had the strength to make my voice out loud and reassure them that I would do my best for their mother. With a playful mood I tried to cheer them up a little bit.

For a few minutes I completely blanked out. I found myself driving back home thinking the faces of my own children waiting for me to be loving and joyful. Entirely lost in my thoughts, I was approaching a crossroad with a STOP sign. Neither the sign nor the warning bus horn coming was enough to stop me. We crashed. Fortunately, nobody was injured..."

My narration may be way too emotional for a scientific article but that incident and the way I experienced it made me realize that a homecare nurse should always be emotionally balanced and gifted with incredible soul strength no matter what.

In conclusion, I would like to remind the words of Leo Buscaglia: *“When we can embrace death as simply another aspect of the life cycle, we will give appreciation and value to each life encounter knowing it will never occur again.”*

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