

# The role of Intensive Care Unit diaries in the grieving process: a monocentric qualitative study

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**Background:** In latest years the attention to mental wellness of both patient and families in the intensive care units is becoming increasingly important. The intensive care unit diary is proven to be a useful tool to reduce post-traumatic stress disease, anxiety and depression.

**Aim:** To investigate the role of intensive care unit diaries in the grief process experienced by family members of a person died in the intensive care unit.

**Methods:** An interview by phone call was performed to relatives of patients died in the intensive care unit of San Gerardo Hospital, Monza, Italy. We investigated the perception and use of the intensive care unit diary with a twenty questions form built using the bipolar Likert Scale question type.

**Results:** Nine relatives were interviewed. Eight out of nine (88,9 %) family members felt the diary helped them in the grieving process, in addition they said it helped them to process their loss in different ways. The diary was seen by the bereaved as a vector to recover from a period of suffering.

**Conclusions:** The overall perception of the intensive care unit diary is confirmed to be positive. The diary mostly helped relatives to “give back something of what we lost”. This study adfirms the overall positive link between ICU diary and bereavement in our context, however further studies are needed to confirm the usefulness of this tool in this peculiar meaning.

**Keywords:** ICU diary, family, grief, bereavement, mourning, PICS

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