Follow up visits to an ICU: Critical care nurses' experience

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The aim

The aim of this study was to describe CCNs’ experiences of follow-up visits by formerly critically ill people discharged from an ICU and their close relatives.
The follow-up visit

The CCN and the physician who were most involved participated in the follow-up visit with the person who had been critically ill and their close relatives, if any.

People who had been critically ill were offered the possibility of a follow-up visit to the ICU, with their close relatives.
Participants

Eight CCNs who had experience of follow-up visits in an ICU.

Data analysis

Qualitative thematic content analysis was applied to the interview texts.
Findings

Being prepared
Meeting a healthy person
Meeting a person who does not remember
Being in a learning situation
Being prepared

...you feel you have to be prepared; I think they may be disappointed if I can’t explain and tell them things... they expect us to be able to give answers as we have invited them to come back and they will have the chance to ask questions.
Meeting a healthy person

It’s always fascinating meeting people coming back in their own clothes with their hair cut, in a shirt and good colour in their skin. Sometimes they look so healthy when they come that it can be hard to recognize them.
Meeting a person who does not remember

It means a lot when we can say what we have talked about when they were here ill. I think they wonder a lot about what as happened and how they could manage to come back to life, but it feels a bit strange when we have experienced them as conscious and they don’t remember that afterwards...
Conclusion

The benefits of follow-up visits to an ICU for formerly critically ill people and their close relatives are already known. This study shows that follow-up visits to the ICU also have advantages for the CCNs.

Through sharing the experiences of formerly critically ill peoples’ and their close relatives’ CCNs receive valuable feedback about their work.

Thank you