Exploring Religious Leaders’ Experiences in End-of-Life Care

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The purpose of this qualitative descriptive pilot study was to understand end-of-life ethical issues from the perspective of a diverse group of religious leaders. The specific aims were to describe the experiences of religious leaders who have assisted individuals facing end-of-life ethical concerns, and to evaluate the feasibility of conducting a larger study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Central Texas with religious leaders from four different religions: Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism. Analysis revealed common themes among experiences of religious leaders, including respect and dignity of life and the body, challenges at end-of-life, and beliefs about the afterlife which all have far reaching effects on the practices at end-of-life. Understanding these experiences and viewpoints can further the ability of healthcare professionals to help those facing end-of-life situations.