

Assessing the Level of Nurse-Patient Communication: Challenges, Strategies and Impact on Healthcare Delivery

Bren Javen P. Galvez, RN¹ Joel John A. Dela Merced²

<https://orcid.org/009-008-9296-4566>, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1459-52742>

St. Bernadette of Lourdes College¹

bjgalvez@sbl.edu.ph¹, jdelamerced@slbc.edu.ph²

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the level of nurse–patient communication in terms of challenges, strategies, and impact on healthcare delivery among nurses in a private hospital. Specifically, it determined the respondents’ demographic profile, the level of nurse–patient communication, and the significant differences in communication when grouped according to demographic variables. The study utilized a quantitative descriptive-comparative research design. Findings revealed that language barriers emerged as the most common challenge, while verifying patient understanding was the most frequently used communication strategy. Effective nurse–patient communication has been shown to strengthen trust, improve patient satisfaction, and enhance healthcare outcomes. Results further showed no significant differences in nurse–patient communication when grouped according to demographic profile. However, educational attainment differed significantly across selected communication domains. The study concluded that effective nurse–patient communication plays a vital role in improving healthcare delivery despite existing communication barriers. It is recommended that healthcare institutions strengthen communication training programs, address workplace barriers, and provide continuous professional development opportunities to further enhance nurse–patient communication practice.

Keywords: *Nurse–patient communication; communication challenges; communication strategies; healthcare delivery; nurses; private hospital*

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication between nurses and patients is a fundamental component of high-quality healthcare delivery. Despite the acknowledged significance of communication in healthcare services, several challenges affect communication between nurses and patients. The study aims to explore how nurse-patient communication is affected by nurse behaviour and work conditions.

Statement of the Problem

This study dealt with how effective communication is essential for building trust and ensuring patient satisfaction. By analyzing effective communication, researchers can optimize nurse-patient communication, ultimately improve healthcare outcomes, and foster a more harmonious healthcare environment. The factors and things to consider that influence nurse-patient communication are the following: 1) Demographic Profile of the Respondents: Name, Gender, Age, Highest Educational Attainment, Length of Experience, and Trainings attended.

The next question to address is the level of nurse-patient communication in terms of challenges, strategies, and impact on healthcare delivery. The third problem is whether there is a significant difference in the level of nurse-patient communication when grouped according to their profiles, and the last is, based on the study's findings, what action plans can be proposed.

Scope and Delimitations

The aim of the research is to investigate the dynamics of nurse-patient communication in the provision of health care. This includes how nurse communication competencies, such as listening to patients, nonverbal communication, and empathetic speech, contribute to patient comfort, health improvement, and cure. Data are collected through a structured questionnaire administered to nurses to assess their communication practices, challenges, strategies, and their impact on the provision of health care.

Review of Related Literature

Effective communication between nurses and patients is essential for providing great healthcare. This study examined the effects of effective nurse-patient communication on health care quality, including patient satisfaction, adherence to treatment plans, patient safety, and clinical outcomes. The study found that communication skills play important roles in encouraging patient-centered care, creating trust and collaboration, and improving health outcomes. Other considerations for effective nurse-patient communication include verbal and nonverbal communication, active listening, empathy, cultural competence, and health literacy. (Alotaibi et al., 2022).

Nursing forms an important component in health care delivery. The heart of quality care is effective communication. The quality of communication significantly impacts patient safety. Barriers to communication reduce its quality and increase the risk of adverse outcomes in patient care. The overall aim of this review is to produce evidence-based knowledge on the effects of communication barriers between nurses and patients on patient safety (Eränen, M., & Kungu, J., 2021).

Theoretical Framework

Hildegard Peplau's Interpersonal Relations Theory emphasizes the importance of the nurse-patient relationship for health outcomes and emotional well-being. The study explores how communication challenges, nurses' strategies, and the quality of interactions affect patient compliance, understanding of treatment, and overall healthcare outcomes.

Faye Abdellah's 21 Nursing Problems Theory is relevant to this study because it provides a basis for understanding communication as a means of identifying patients' needs and offering coping strategies.

Nola Pender's Health Promotion Model is used as a framework for understanding the nurse-patient communication that can help patients take active parts in their health management, comply with treatment regimens, and improve their health outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in the Input-Process-Output model, which is underpinned by three nursing theories mentioned in the theoretical framework. The challenges likely to be

encountered in this study include language barriers, cultural differences, workload pressures, and nurse- and patient-related factors, whereas the strategies likely to be employed include active listening, empathy, and patient education. Peplau's theory emphasizes that the nurse-patient relationship is therapeutic, where trust, cooperation, and communication are major aspects of nursing care. Abdellah's theory supports identifying patient needs through problem-solving communication, whereas Pender's theory supports the role of nurses in motivating patients towards health promotion.

METHODOLOGY

This section presents the research methodology used in the study. The methods were chosen to collect reliable data applicable to the study.

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative comparative research design to investigate the level of nurse-patient communication and identify whether significant differences existed when respondents were grouped according to their demographic profile. A descriptive-comparative research design was appropriate for the study, as it enabled the researcher to describe the current status of nurse-patient communication and to compare responses across different groups of respondents.

Research Steps

The research was conducted in a selected private hospital. Data were collected from 132 nurses via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, t-tests, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The research instrument used in the study was self-formulated and self-structured by the researcher based on the objectives of the study and relevant literature.

Data Collection and Sample Selection

The data collection process used a questionnaire administered via Google Forms, completed by 132 respondents across different units of a private institution. The pilot test was conducted with a group of respondents who had similar characteristics but were not part of the sample used in this study. The data-gathering procedure for the study followed a systematic, organized process to ensure the research was conducted ethically, accurately, and efficiently. The participants consisted of nurses assigned to various nursing units who were directly involved in patient care and communication.

Data Analysis Methods

In this study, all gathered data were analyzed using SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Data were collated, coded, tabulated, and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Frequency and percentage distributions were used to present the numerical data and outline the demographic profile of the respondents.

Research Hypotheses and Validation

The study aimed to determine whether there is a significant difference between the level of nurse–patient communication and the effectiveness of healthcare delivery. The study assumes that effective nurse–patient communication leads to better healthcare outcomes. The level and quality of communication between nurses and patients directly and positively impact the effectiveness of healthcare delivery.

Study Limitations and Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to fundamental ethical principles to ensure that the rights, safety, and welfare of the participants are protected throughout the research process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of the respondents is considered and analyzed based on the data collated. For gender, the data revealed that male respondents slightly outnumbered female respondents. Regarding age, findings indicate that the respondents were primarily young to middle-aged professionals, suggesting varying levels of maturity, experience, and professional exposure that may influence their communication practices in the healthcare setting. In terms of highest educational attainment, the majority have higher educational qualifications. This contributed to enhanced communication skills, clinical judgment, and professional competence in nursing practice. In terms of experience, most respondents were in the middle stage, suggesting that their accumulated experience may have contributed to the development of effective communication skills and a better understanding of patient needs within the healthcare environment. Lastly, for trainings attended, respondents actively participated in professional development activities that may have enhanced their knowledge, communication abilities, and overall effectiveness in delivering quality patient care.

Regarding nurse-patient communication challenges, the findings indicate that nurses encounter barriers such as language differences, emotional concerns, and workload demands that may affect effective communication with patients. Nurses actively use communication strategies to enhance understanding and strengthen interactions with patients. Respondents strongly recognized that communication fosters trust, improves adherence to treatment, and enhances the overall quality of care.

For the third problem, findings revealed no significant difference in nurse–patient communication. However, a significant difference was observed when respondents were grouped according to highest educational attainment, particularly in communication strategies and overall communication level.

Lastly, the proposed action plan uses the continuous quality improvement (CQI) cycle. First is the need to identify the need for change by recognizing the problems/gaps. Second, use appropriate interventions based on the collated evidence. Third, implement the identified interventions. The last phase is to evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions. Overall, improving nurse–patient communication requires a structured, ongoing process of identifying issues, planning solutions, implementing changes, and evaluating results to achieve better healthcare outcomes

SUMMARY

The findings indicate that although nurses experience considerable communication challenges, they consistently apply effective strategies, resulting in a strong positive impact on healthcare delivery. The results also suggest that communication practices are not significantly influenced by most demographic variables, emphasizing the need for system-wide interventions rather than focusing on individual characteristics alone.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that nurse–patient communication is a critical component of effective healthcare delivery, with respondents consistently demonstrating high awareness of both its challenges and its importance. Despite multiple barriers, nurses can apply appropriate and effective communication strategies in their daily practice. The findings reveal that nurses actively utilize strategies such as simplifying language, active listening, verifying patient understanding, and adapting communication styles to meet patient needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For nursing practice, it is recommended that nurses continue to strengthen the use of effective communication strategies such as active listening, use of simple and clear language, and verification of patient understanding. For hospital administration, address systemic barriers that affect communication, particularly heavy workload and lack of privacy in clinical settings. For training and development, implement regular and structured training programs focused on therapeutic communication, cultural competence, and emotional intelligence. For healthcare systems, strengthen the use of supplementary communication tools to overcome language and literacy barriers and reinforce understanding beyond direct nurse–patient interaction. For nursing education, continue to integrate communication skills development across the curriculum, emphasizing both theoretical knowledge and clinical application. For future research, explore other factors influencing nurse–patient communication, such as organizational culture, leadership support, and patient-related variables.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to my adviser for his invaluable guidance, inspiration, and motivation throughout the research process. Deep appreciation is also extended to my wife and children for their unwavering love, encouragement, and support. Finally, heartfelt thanks are given to Fe Del Mundo Medical Center for providing the opportunity, financial assistance, and moral support that made the completion of this study possible.

AI DECLARATION STATEMENT:

AI-assisted tools were used solely to improve the grammar, clarity, and overall structure of this manuscript. No AI tools were utilized in the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data. All intellectual and academic contributions to this work are solely attributable to the author

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