



A SURVEY TO ASSESS NURSE-PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE NURSE-PATIENT COMMUNICATION IN CRITICAL CARE UNITS OF SELECTED HOSPITALS IN DELHI, INDIA

Nursing Science

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ABSTRACT

Effective nurse-patient communication is vital for delivering quality healthcare, particularly in critical care settings. This study explored barriers to nurse-patient communication as perceived by nurses working in the critical care units of selected hospitals in Delhi. A survey of 280 nursing professionals was conducted, and descriptive statistics was used to analyze the data. The results revealed that environmental barriers, such as lack of privacy and excessive noise, were significant obstacles. Nurse-related barriers, including limited time, technical jargon, and cultural differences, were also prominent. Patient-related barriers, such as cognitive impairments and sensory deficits, further hindered communication. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance communication in critical care settings, including training programs and improved staffing.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the cornerstone of effective nursing care and plays a critical role in patient outcomes and satisfaction. Effective communication becomes even more essential in critical care settings, where patients are often vulnerable and rely on nurses for their well-being. However, communication barriers frequently arise, leading to patient dissatisfaction, prolonged hospital stays, and suboptimal care.

This study identified perceived barriers to effective communication in Delhi's critical care units. By understanding these barriers, this study provides insights into improving communication strategies, enhancing patient outcomes, and fostering better nurse-patient relationships.

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive survey design to identify communication barriers perceived by nurses. The study was conducted at selected government and private hospitals in Delhi. A total of 280 nurses working in critical care units participated in this study. The survey instrument included structured questions addressing demographic data and three barriers: environmental, nurse-related, and patient-related barriers. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and the results are presented in tables and graphs for clarity.

RESULTS

The study revealed significant findings across three major barriers: environmental, nurse-related, and patient-related barriers.

Environmental Barriers

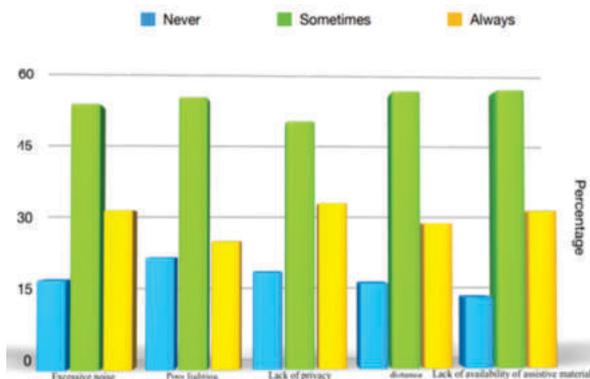


Table: 1 Bar Diagram Showing the Percentage Distribution of Perceived Communication Barriers Among Nursing Officers According to Environmental Barriers.

A substantial percentage of respondents highlighted lack of privacy due to centralized bed setups as a major communication hindrance, with 32.5% rated it as a constant issue. Excessive noise from medical equipment and staff communication was another frequently cited barrier, affecting 31.07% of the participants. Poor lighting though less frequently reported, still affected the communication of 25% of the respondents.

Nurse-Related Barriers



Table: 2 Bar Diagram Showing the Percentage Distribution of Perceived Communication Barriers of Nursing Officers According to Nurse-related Barriers.

Nurse-related barriers included the use of technical terminology and complex medical terms, which 26.78% of the nurses identified as consistently problematic. 29.64% of nurses reported limited time due to high workloads as a major obstacle, whereas 31.78% of nurses reported cultural differences affecting communication. Stress and burnout were also significant barriers, with 28.92% of nurses indicating that feeling overwhelmed hindered their ability to communicate effectively.

Patient-related Barriers

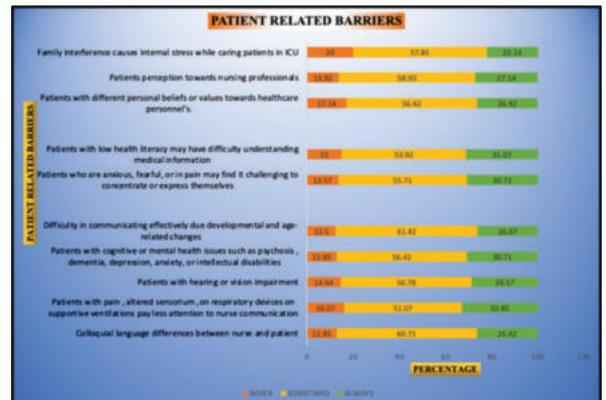


Table: 3 Bar Diagram Showing the Percentage Distribution of Perceived Communication Barriers Among Nursing Officers According to Patient-related Barriers.

Patients' medical conditions, such as pain, altered sensorium, and reliance on ventilators, were the most significant barriers, with 32.85% of nurses reporting these as persistent issues. Cognitive impairments

and sensory deficits further impeded communication in 30.71% and 28.57% of nurses, respectively. Family interference and low health literacy were also notable challenges, highlighting the complexity of communication in critical care.

DISCUSSION

The findings align with the existing literature on communication challenges in healthcare settings. Similar studies have highlighted how environmental factors, such as noise and lack of privacy, can disrupt communication. Nurse-related barriers, including inadequate training and excessive workloads, are consistent with the findings of studies conducted in India and the global context.

Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach. Hospitals should invest in staff training to improve communication skills, particularly in nontechnical language use and cultural sensitivities. Staffing levels must also be optimized to allow nurses sufficient time for meaningful patient interactions. Infrastructure improvements, such as better lighting and enhanced privacy measures, can also mitigate environmental barriers.

CONCLUSION

Effective nurse-patient communication is a critical determinant of quality of care in critical care units. This study identified significant barriers that impeded communication, including environmental, nurse-related, and patient-related barriers. Targeted training, policy changes, and infrastructure improvements can significantly enhance patient care and satisfaction.

Implications

Research

Further studies are needed to explore the impact of interventions intended to reduce barriers to communication. Quantitative and qualitative approaches can provide deeper insights into these strategies' effectiveness.

Education

Nursing curricula should incorporate therapeutic communication, cultural competence, and time management. Simulation exercises and role play can help nurses navigate complex communication scenarios.

Practice

Nurses should adopt patient-centered communication strategies, tailoring their approach to each patient's cultural background and psychological state.

Administration

Health care administrators should prioritize workshops on communication skills and stress management. Adequate staffing levels and infrastructure improvements, such as noise reduction measures, can also enhance communication in CCUs.