

Investigating the Viewpoint of Nursing Students in Relation to the Barriers to Effective Communication Between Nurses and Patients in the Hospitals of Iranshahr City, 2015

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Abstract: Communicating effectively with patients is one of the fundamental characteristics of nursing care which the objective of this research is to investigate the viewpoint of nursing students of Iranshahr City in relation to effective communication between nurse and patient. This is a descriptive-analytical study which conducted using Morgan's formula with a sample size of 66 subjects who are the learners of Nursing Faculty of Medical Sciences of Iranshahr. Information was gathered from the questionnaire of barriers to effective communication between nurse and patient; the questionnaire had an acceptable reliability and validity. Then, collected data was analyzed by SPSS Software and descriptive statistics. The results showed that from the students' point of view; occupational and environmental dimensions were the most important communication barriers in the fields of the relationship between nurse and patient, on the other hand, the lowest barriers to effective communication were the individual and clinical dimensions. According to the results of this survey and with respect to the occupational and environmental dimensions which are the highest and the clinical dimension as the lowest dimension among the dimensions of nurse and patient relationship, the necessity of investigating and solving the occupational and environmental problems of nursing in relation to the patients should be seriously considered.

Key words: Patient, nurse, communication, relationship, dimension

INTRODUCTION

Communication is the transfer of verbal and nonverbal data. In fact, the nurse-patient relationship leads to different caring behaviors which are considered as the foundation of providing high quality nursing care (Fakhr *et al.*, 2011). Communication is one of the human's basic needs. Every interaction is an opportunity to achieve effective communication and participation in understanding the issue and would lead to achieving mutual objectives. In the nursing profession, the relationship between nurses and patients in caring standards has been highly emphasized and generally, communication of the nurse with the patient is necessary for desirably providing the caring role (Sadeghi *et al.*, 2011).

Communication with patients can help the nurse to recognize the patient's needs. The most important role of nurses is to train and help raising awareness of patients to prevent disease through communication. In fact, clinical learning is the heart of a clinical practice (Navabi and Asri, 2003). Role playing in professional nursing takes place through communication. This means that proper implementation of nursing interventions

requires appropriate communication between the nurse and patient because in addition to having a proper relationship which is important for the patient, it's considered as the basis of nursing in taking care of patients.

Sickness and hospital stay are often stressful and accompanied with threatening experiences for patients and their family members. Nurses by employing communication skills play a major role in reducing these experiences. In fact, communication is an important aspect of caring that is provided by the health care workers, especially nurses. The process of communication has an interactive and dynamic nature and the importance of studying its effective factors which are the nurse and the patient is evident (Fakhr *et al.*, 2011).

Researchers believe that although significant progress was made in physical care but in general, taking care of all aspects of human being which include mental and emotional care is being overlooked. So that emotional and mental problems are the majority of patients' problems in the special section. Mental actions of patients in the special section are predictable as this section is full of stressors that can affect the patient in different ways.

In this regard, a study was conducted by Baraz Ardejani Shahram and his colleagues in the training hospitals of Ahvaz in which the workload of nursing, the hard working, lack of amenities for nurses, physical and mental fatigue, not appreciating the nurses' effort, nurses' unfamiliarity with local language, heavy workload of hospital nurses, age difference between the patient and nurse, nurses' misconduct and gender differences within nursing are all considered as communication barriers (Shahram *et al.*, 2010). Also, in the study of Maryam Aghabarari and other colleagues it was shown that training communication skills to nurses was done in educational environments but they didn't use these skills permanently, despite the fact that teaching communication skills is an important part of educational programs of the graduate healthcare careers. But there are a lot of concerns about poor communication. So that poor communication by the patient cares team including nurses is one of the major issues in complaints related to health centers in countries such as the UK.

Also, in a study conducted by Maryam Aghabarari and her colleagues, the most important barriers that were emphasized by nurses and patients are as follows: being constantly overworked, lack of nursing staff to patients, reluctance and disappointment of nurses to their profession, inappropriate environmental conditions (the presence of critically ill patients, excessive noise, lack of ventilation...), inadequate knowledge and lack of awareness between patients and nurses on the description of their tasks, anxiety and specific physical and psychological conditions caused by disease in patients.

Ineffective communication prevents the patient from being recovered or can even deprive the patient of health or life forever. On the contrary, having a favorable relationship affects on the patient's recovery trend much more than drug therapy. In fact, nurses will be successful in their career when they establish a desirable relationship with their patients. Building a good and kindly relationship with patients and patients' confidence in nurses is one of the keys to success in nursing. Nurses who are able to establish an effective inter-personal relationship act better in patient health promotion (Sadeghi *et al.*, 2011). The inability to establish a reassuring relationship with the patient is a problem that can not be easily ignored. Violence, ignoring the patient, indifference and neglect of the patient are behaviors that can cause dissatisfaction in the patient.

Hospitalized patients get annoyed by the lack of desirable communication, attention and empathy and also

the lack of friendly relations with the nurses and Believe that the amount of time nurses spend to communicate with patients is very short and nurse-patient dialogues are very superficial.

This is while nurses, due to their close relationship with the patient and having skills and medical scientific and practical knowledge can play an important role in changing patient attitudes toward their illness and self-care through building a proper relationship with patients and their families.

Three important dimensions of human connection that has been stressed mostly are the sender of the message, the receiver and the environment. Communication in fact is the interaction between the message sender and the receiver and the environment affects this process. In a hospital these three aspects can be considered as the nurses, the patient and the environment of the hospital and each case must be considered while investigating the communication barriers (Timor and Hassani, 2010).

In addition to the nursing graduates, students are one of the important classes that are directly associated with patients in long-term periods, especially nursing students. They are often on the front line of patient care, and many patients share their experiences with them. The relationship between the student and the patient will provide some valuable caring experiences to both sides, especially in situations where both of them should participate in solving the patient's problems. This communication can help the student in gaining nursing skills and being ready to accept roles that some day should be responsible for it as a nurse. In fact, communicating properly is an important part of the nursing students' responsibilities. However, patients are also inclined to participate in the students' learning process and their social and health interaction. Therefore, nursing students with proper communication and physical and psychological aid to patients can help them increase their skills against problems, to become an independent person and participate in their treatment and self-care program. Therefore, emphasizing on this subject is mandatory in clinical training (Fakhr *et al.*, 2012).

According to the mentioned discussions and to investigate the nurse-patient relationship more precisely, we intended to measure the barriers to an effective communication from the nursing students' point of view (Interns and externs) and aimed to examine its different dimensions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is a descriptive study which is conducted by the use of Morgan's formula among the nursing trainees and interns of Medical Sciences Faculty of Iranshahr with a sample size of 67 subjects. The data collection tool was a questionnaire entitled investigating the nursing students' attitude toward the barriers to effective communication between the nurse and the patient that was distributed among the student with personal satisfaction. This questionnaire has 30 questions and all questions have 1, 2, 3, 4 dimensions: individual and social factors job characteristics clinical conditions environmental factors. The content validity has been obtained from the study of Baraz Bardejany and colleagues through library studies and surveys of teachers and trainers of Nursing and Midwifery School, University of Medical Sciences, Ahvaz. The method of internal homogeneity (making odd and even) is used in order to ensure scientific reliability in which a reliability coefficient of 85% is obtained and then the gathered information was analyzed by SPSS Software and descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that among 67 students of nursing degree, 33 males and 34 females participated in the study. Also the mean age of participants was 22 years that each of them had a background of presence in hospital for at least 1-2 years. From the perspective of participants, the most important barriers to effective communication between nurse and patient in order of priority were occupational dimension with an average of 31 ± 7 and also environmental dimension with an average of 30 ± 7 (Table 1). Also, in this regard, based on the students' viewpoint, individual dimension with an average of 25 ± 6 and then the clinical dimension with an average of 12 ± 3 were respectively the lowest communication barriers.

As the results showed, occupational dimension was the most important dimension of the barriers to effective communication between nurses and patients which is in line with the students and interns point of view. Also, research conducted by Samaneh Nakhaei in conjunction with the factors influencing the relationship between students and patients which was based on the view point of nursing students of Birjand Medical University, indicates that occupational dimension (professional) is the most important aspect of barriers to effective communication which is consistent with this study. Another study conducted by Baraz Pordanjani and colleagues in which the barriers to effective

Table 1: Descriptive statistics

variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Personal dimension	61	9.00	40.00	25.00	6.00
Occupational dimension	64	13.00	45.00	31.00	7.00
Clinical dimension	65	4.00	20.00	12.00	3.00
Environmental dimension	64	11.00	45.00	30.00	7.00
Valid N (listwise)	53				

communication between nurses and patients were investigated in teaching hospitals of Ahvaz, also represents the same thing about the occupational dimension which is consistent with the present study (Shahram *et al.*, 2010). But in the study of Dr. Timor Agha Molaei that was conducted in relation to the communication barriers between nurses and elderly patients, some cases such as using medical terminology, not being intimate with the patient, not having a friendly attitude toward the patient were more important barriers to effective communication which is not in line with this study (Timor and Hassani, 2010). Of course here, different conditions can be a good justification for this comparison. The environmental dimension was the next dimension that became clear in this study and had a high average. A study was performed by Sadeghi *et al.* (2011) to compare the perception of nurses and hospitalized adolescents and indicates the importance of observance of the nurse-patient relationship. From the nurse viewpoint, explaining the required follow up care after discharge was more important and for adolescent, appropriate oral communication and patiently listening to their words mattered most.

Also in the study by Ali *et al.* (2012) conducted in conjunction with the explanation of nurse-patient communication strategies in Imam Khomeini Hospital, Tehran University of Medical Sciences and the results were related to the active role of the nurse and patient's passive role which does not match with the present study.

Another aspect of individual and social factors is related to effective communication barriers between nurses and patients which according to this study was less important in comparison with the two previous dimensions and is consistent with the study of Dr. Timor Agha Molaei that was conducted in relation to the communication barriers between nurses and elderly patients (Shahram *et al.*, 2010). And it does not match with the studies by Samaneh Nakhaei conducted in relation to factors affecting student-patient relationship.

The clinical dimension that according to the study results ranked as the lowest barrier to effective communication between nurse and patient doesn't match with the study performed by Samaneh Nakhaei which was in relation to factors affecting student-patient relationship.

CONCLUSION

Due to the lack of facilities and the number of personnel and high workloads of nurses as well as the culture and attitudes of nurses and patients toward effective communication, the results of this study can be a good justification. In fact, this study showed that nursing students considered the occupational and environmental dimensions as the most important factors affecting barriers to effective communication while they identified the clinical dimension as the least important dimension.

Therefore health and education managers should intensify their efforts to eliminate these declared factors in order to improve the nurse-patient relationship with regard to the particular circumstances and thereby improve the quality of offered caring services.

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