Journal of Health Sciences and Medical Development
Vol. 2, No. 03, pp. 117-127
journal.iistr.org/index.php/HESMED
DOI: 10.56741/hesmed.v2i03.358

Communication Skills of Gynaecological Medical Staff Concerning the Patient

[1]Hajrullah Latifi, [2]Drilon Latifi*
Corresponding Author: * drilonlatifi0@gmail.com
[1] Fehmi Agani University, Gjakovë, Kosovo
[2] Rezonanca Collage of Medicinal Science, Pristina, Kosovo

ARTICLE INFO

Article history
Received 26 May 2023
Revised 9 September 2023
Accepted 12 September 2023

Keywords
effective communication
gynaecology
medical personnel
patient

ABSTRACT

Effective communication of medical staff in gynaecology and obstetrics, in relation between the doctor and the patient, is essential and of particular importance. Communication helps patients to have trust in the healthcare services provided by the medical staff and can impact the effectiveness and efficiency of treatment. Medical personnel should be careful and sensitive to the patient's needs, understand their problems, and have good communication and information-sharing skills. An informed patient is more likely to understand the diagnosis and treatment, which can enhance cooperation with the doctor. Quick and successful contact by medical personnel can help reduce patient anxiety and stress, affecting the achievement of treatment goals. In gynaecology and obstetrics, effective communication between the doctor, resulting in effective treatment and care, is crucial for the mother and her fetus. The communication between the doctor and the pregnant woman has a close emotional connection, considering the specific condition of pregnant women.

This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

Introduction

Communication exists everywhere, and anytime people take a breath. From birth, communication begins with the newborn's awareness of their surroundings until death. For

human survival, one of the fundamental requirements is verbal or non-verbal expression [1]. In our era, communication is a concept encountered in every field, and its importance is increasing. This concept, addressed in various ways in the production and service sector, makes its significance more pronounced. The service industry involves much interpersonal interaction, and this interaction also influences service outcomes. The communication factor in healthcare services should be considered by service providers, service users, and all others involved in this sector. One of the products of healthcare services is the concept of patient satisfaction, which all institutions and individuals embrace.

The concept of patient satisfaction is one of the crucial criteria in the delivery of quality healthcare services. In contrast, effective healthcare communication is considered one of the components of ensuring patient satisfaction [2]. The quality of service, which is the foundation of the medical industry, needs to be improved in reality, reflected not only in the professional skills of medical personnel but also in their attitudes and behaviours in providing medical services [3].

Quality in healthcare is divided into three aspects: the technical aspect, the interpersonal communication aspect, and the convenience aspect of healthcare. The technical part, involving diagnosing and treating a health problem based on medical science and knowledge, reflects how well it is applied in healthcare. The quality of interpersonal communication involves healthcare personnel such as doctors, nurses, and support staff who communicate with patients in a friendly manner, are always ready to help, etc., for the individuals involved in the service delivery process. The comfort aspect refers to the amenities provided in the hospital environment [4]. Effective communication is an essential component in the process of healing a patient that should be maintained by medical personnel [5].

Practical communication skills of healthcare professionals are vital for delivering effective healthcare and can have positive outcomes, including reducing anxiety, blame, pain, and disease symptoms. Moreover, they can enhance patient satisfaction, understanding, compliance, and collaboration with the medical team and improve the patient's physiological and functional status; it also significantly impacts the education provided to the patient [6].

Healthcare professionals, specifically doctors and nurses, are the initial communicators with patients receiving medical services. Therefore, the research will focus on the communication of medical personnel, including doctors and nurses, with the patient during healthcare services and the impact of communication on the quality of healthcare services, which is closely related to patient satisfaction. This study aims to investigate and demonstrate the effects of healthcare professional-patient communication on the quality of gynaecological services in favour of the health of the mother and fetus.

Current research has shown that two-thirds of family members of pregnant women experience symptoms of anxiety and depression due to the sensitivity of the patient's cases during pregnancy. In doctor-patient relationships, other factors, such as the patient's family members and close relatives and the teamwork involved in the pregnant patient's treatment, are also involved. Such a situation can lead to a degradation of the ability to understand information correctly, often resulting in confusing cases between the family and the medical personnel regarding the provision of medical services. Communication is the cornerstone of the patient relationship in all healthcare settings, with the main aims being to establish a good interpersonal relationship, exchange information, and make decisions regarding treatment. Communication issues are widely regarded as necessary for clinics and researchers, especially since patients have become increasingly informed about their conditions in recent decades and are involved in decision-making [7].

The overall objective of this study is to analyse the effect of communication and evaluate the impact of healthcare professionals on the quality of services in gynaecology. The specific goals are as follows:

- Identify factors related to effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients.
- Evaluate the current communication between healthcare professionals and patients in gynaecology.
- Determine the expectations of healthcare professionals and patients regarding more advanced communication for quality and adequate service in gynaecology.
- Assess the importance of healthcare professionals-patient communication in gynaecology and obstetrics during healthcare services.

Communication is the establishment of a connection with another person. In this context, the information provided to the patient or their family, especially in gynaecology and obstetrics, can elicit various reactions. This is why delivering information requires maturity, skills, and a sense of compassion. This study will be of great importance in the healthcare sector as it will identify communication gaps and, if recommendations are implemented, can help improve service provision. The new knowledge gained will significantly contribute to the healthcare field and the resolution of issues related to the communication between medical personnel and patients.

Methods

The qualitative method employed in this research draws upon the researcher's extensive experience as a medical doctor. It is further enriched by a comprehensive review of related studies and literature, particularly in communication and healthcare. Integrating these

various sources of knowledge establishes a robust foundation for the study. The discussion is organised into four distinct aspects to facilitate a comprehensive analysis. Firstly, the research explores factors contributing to effective communication in the healthcare setting. This entails examining clarity, empathy, active listening, non-verbal cues, and cultural sensitivity. Understanding these factors aims to identify critical components that can enhance communication between healthcare professionals and patients.

Next, the research evaluates the current communication practices in the healthcare context. This involves examining the prevailing methods, channels, and tools used for communication between healthcare professionals and patients. By critically assessing the existing practices, strengths and weaknesses can be identified, providing insights into areas that require improvement.

Furthermore, the research endeavours to determine the communication expectations of both healthcare professionals and patients. This involves gathering perspectives and insights from individuals within these groups through interviews, surveys, or focus groups. By understanding both parties' expectations, preferences, and needs, a more patient-centered approach to healthcare communication can be developed. Lastly, the research assesses the importance of effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients. This entails examining the impact of communication on various aspects, such as patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, health outcomes, and overall healthcare experience. The significance of effective communication in promoting positive healthcare outcomes can be underscored by analysing these dimensions.

By employing a qualitative methodology and drawing upon the researcher's firsthand experience, supplemented by a thorough examination of related studies and theories in communication and healthcare, this research endeavours to shed light on the multifaceted aspects of healthcare communication. By exploring factors related to effective communication, evaluation of current practices, determination of communication expectations, and assessment of its importance, the study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge in this vital area of healthcare provision.

Result and Discussion

A. Factors related to effective communication

The primary factors that influence the practical communication skills of healthcare professionals are multi-faceted and encompass various elements. There are some commonly recognised factors. One crucial factor is the ability to demonstrate empathy and compassion towards patients. Research has shown that empathic communication positively affects patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and health outcomes [8],[9]. Empathy helps establish a

trusting relationship and promotes open and effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients.

Another critical factor is the clarity of communication. Effective healthcare communication requires clear and jargon-free language to ensure patients fully understand their diagnosis, treatment plans, and instructions. A study by Ref. [10] emphasised the importance of clear communication in reducing patient anxiety and improving satisfaction. Active listening skills are also critical for effective communication. By attentively listening to patients, healthcare professionals can better understand their concerns, needs, and expectations. A study by Ref. [11] emphasised the role of active listening in patient-centered communication and its positive impact on patient outcomes.

Cultural sensitivity is essential in healthcare communication, particularly in diverse and multicultural settings. Understanding and respecting cultural differences can help healthcare professionals tailor their communication styles and strategies to meet the unique needs of individual patients. The research by Ref. [12] highlights the importance of cultural competence in healthcare communication and its positive effects on patient satisfaction and outcomes. It's worth noting that the field of healthcare communication is vast and constantly evolving, with ongoing research contributing to our understanding of the subject.

B. Evaluation of current communication practices

Frequently asked questions during research in the field of gynecology-obstetrics:

- Is the communication between medical personnel and patients at the appropriate level?
- How effective is the collaboration between healthcare professionals (doctors and nurses) about patients in gynaecology and obstetrics?
- What barriers can adequate communication between medical personnel and pregnant women be?
- How does the communication of medical personnel with patients impact the quality of services, particularly in gynaecology and obstetrics?
- To what extent does effective communication of medical personnel, including doctors and nurses, contribute to improving service quality in gynaecology and obstetrics?

There are many strategies for enhancing communication-based on the findings. Comprehensive training programs for medical personnel can improve their communication skills. Training should encompass active listening, empathy, and cultural sensitivity. Research by Ref. [8] demonstrates that training in compassion and communication positively impacts patient satisfaction and compliance. It is important to reveal that patient satisfaction is essential. Adopting patient-centered approaches enhances communication. Involving patients

in shared decision-making and addressing their concerns improves patient satisfaction. A study by Ref. [13] emphasises the importance of patient-centered communication in obstetrics and gynecology.

The research found a correlation between staff members experiencing communication difficulties. This situation has led to suboptimal levels of communication with patients. Therefore, promoting collaboration among healthcare professionals will enhance communication. Interprofessional education and team-building exercises improve understanding and trust. A systematic review by Ref. [14] highlights interprofessional collaboration's positive impact on obstetrics and gynaecology patient outcomes. To ensure optimum communication, the hospital may apply standardised communication protocols. Establishing standardised communication protocols improves consistency and clarity. Clear communication pathways reduce errors and improve coordination. A study by Ref. [15] shows that standardised communication protocols in obstetric emergencies improve team performance and patient outcomes. Incorporating technology-based communication tools enhances efficiency and accessibility. Electronic health records and secure messaging systems facilitate seamless information sharing. Research by Ref. [16] highlights the benefits of technology in improving communication and patient engagement in obstetric care.

The other strategy is to provide patient education. Providing comprehensive educational materials empowers patients to engage in their healthcare. Clear and accessible information improves communication. A study by Ref. [17] emphasises the importance of patient education in promoting communication and shared decision-making in obstetrics. In this monitoring process, it is essential to maintain the feedback. Obtaining feedback from patients and healthcare professionals helps identify areas for improvement. Regular feedback collection supports continuous improvement. Research by Ref. [18] emphasises the value of feedback in enhancing communication and patient-centered care in gynaecology.

C. Determination of communication expectations

Patients have certain expectations when it comes to communication with my doctor. They believe that communication plays a vital role in my overall healthcare experience. Firstly, patients desire more communication and self-expression. It is essential to have the opportunity to openly express my concerns, share my thoughts, and communicate feelings regarding my health condition. Feeling heard and understood by their healthcare team makes them feel valued and reassured.

Mutual understanding is another crucial aspect. Patients want to ensure their doctor truly comprehends the situation, symptoms, and needs. It is essential to feel that the doctor understands the patient's perspective and takes the time to listen and ask questions to

understand health concerns comprehensively. This understanding forms the foundation for practical assistance.

Patients expect that the doctor and nurses will utilise their understanding of thoughts and concerns to provide the patient with the best possible assistance. Patient rely on their expertise and guidance to help navigate the health journey. Patients want to be actively involved in decision-making and value their professional input and recommendations.

The patient needs more communication and self-expression. They will also want to ensure that the other party understands them. Therefore, in this phase, healthcare professionals have essential duties, especially the doctor who first encounters the patient and listens to their problem, and then the nurses who contribute to the solution. Communication is effective when the doctors and nurses can understand the patients' thoughts to help the patient, and equally important is the patient's understanding of the doctor and nurse.

Correct and effective communication between the patient and healthcare professionals is essential for the healthcare worker and the patient. Good communication, patience, and follow-up increase the patient's willingness for treatment and satisfaction with healthcare providers. It also enables healthcare workers to work faster, less stressed, and feel happy and secure. The lack of communication or poor communication can cause irreversible harm in healthcare. In addition, if healthcare workers cause this situation, it will lead to negative societal judgments towards the hospital and create a lack of trust in healthcare providers. If the patient causes it, conflicts are experienced with healthcare professionals, and healthcare professionals may perceive them as complex patients. The healing and adaptation period for the patient is prolonged. Negative communication has psychological effects on both parties in the provision and receipt of services, leading to deficiencies and negatively impacting the quality of service [1].

Electronic physician-patient communication (American College of Physicians-ACP) and the Federation of State Medical Boards, in a published document titled "Online Medical Professionalism: Patient and Public Relationships," have provided some recommendations:

- Doctors should maintain separate professional and personal communication
- Doctors should not "befriend" or contact patients through social media
- Doctors should not use SMS for medical purposes

In this aspect, extra caution should be exercised even with regular patients (who have long-term relationships with the doctor).

The concept of patient evaluation and trust is one of the crucial criteria for providing quality healthcare services, and it is an issue that healthcare institutions, especially healthcare personnel, should focus on. Effective healthcare communication is considered one of the components in ensuring patient satisfaction. The research is focused on providing data on communication that will improve the quality of service by increasing patient appreciation of healthcare.

D. Importance of healthcare professionals-patient communication

The National Academy of Medicine in the United States developed one of the widely accepted healthcare quality classifications. It defines six pillars of high-quality care: safety, effectiveness, patient-centeredness, timeliness, efficiency, and equity [19]. Healthcare quality is a subjective, complex, and multidimensional concept. Donabedian defined healthcare quality as "the application of medical science and technology in a manner that maximises its benefit to health without increasing corresponding risk" [20]. Healthcare professionals-patient communication plays a critical role in providing quality healthcare services. Here are the key reasons highlighting its importance:

- Patient-Centered Care: Effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients is fundamental to patient-centered care. It involves actively involving patients in decision-making, understanding their preferences, and tailoring treatment plans accordingly. Research by Ref. [13 emphasises that patient-centered communication enhances patient satisfaction and engagement in healthcare.
- Building Trust and Confidence: Open and transparent communication fosters trust and confidence between healthcare professionals and patients. Patients who feel listened to and understood are more likely to trust their healthcare providers and follow their recommendations.
- Improved Health Outcomes: Effective communication has been linked to improved health outcomes. When healthcare professionals communicate diagnoses, treatment options, and self-care instructions, patients can better manage their health conditions. Research by Ref. [11] demonstrates that good communication improves medication adherence and health outcomes.
- Patient Safety: Communication is crucial in ensuring patient safety. Clear and accurate communication among healthcare professionals helps prevent medical errors, misdiagnoses, and medication-related mistakes. A study by Ref. [21 adverse events and improving patient safety.
- Emotional Support: Communication supports patients emotionally, especially during challenging healthcare experiences. Empathetic and compassionate communication helps patients cope with their emotions, reduce anxiety, and feel supported throughout

their healthcare journey. Research by Ref. [8] highlights the positive impact of empathetic communication on patient emotional well-being.

- Patient Satisfaction: Effective communication positively influences patient satisfaction. When healthcare professionals engage in clear and respectful communication, address patients' concerns, and involve them in decision-making, patients report higher levels of satisfaction with their healthcare experience. A systematic review by Ref. [22] demonstrates the strong association between communication and patient satisfaction.
- Efficient Healthcare Delivery: Effective communication streamlines healthcare delivery. When information is communicated clearly and concisely, healthcare professionals can collaborate efficiently, leading to better coordination of care, reduced healthcare costs, and improved workflow. Research by Ref. [23] highlights the impact of communication on healthcare efficiency.

In summary, healthcare professionals-patient communication is crucial for patient-centered care, trust-building, improved health outcomes, patient safety, emotional support, patient satisfaction, and efficient healthcare delivery. By recognising the importance of communication and striving for effective and empathetic interactions, healthcare professionals can enhance patients' overall quality of care.

Conclusion

The study's main conclusions can be presented in a short section, which should give the results achieved in the study, which science gap was able to contribute, the limitations of the research, the expected findings and unexpected findings, if any, and suggestions for future studies.

Recommendations

To ensure effective healthcare professionals-patient communication, the following recommendations can be implemented:

- Continuous Communication: Medical personnel should continuously communicate with patients throughout their healthcare journey. This involves regular updates, sharing information, and addressing any concerns or questions the patient may have. Regular communication fosters trust and keeps patients informed and engaged in their care.
- Use of Simple and Understandable Language: Healthcare professionals should communicate using simple, clear, and easily understandable language by the patient. Avoiding medical jargon and using layperson's terms helps ensure the patient

comprehends the information. This promotes effective communication and reduces the risk of misinterpretation.

- Respect for Patient Preferences: Healthcare professionals should consider the patient's or their family's preferences when vital information needs to be conveyed. Some patients prefer face-to-face conversations, while others prefer written materials or digital communication. Respecting and accommodating these preferences enhances the patient's engagement and understanding.
- Clear Guidance on Medication: Healthcare professionals should provide clear and explicit instructions when discussing medication with the patient. This includes information about the medication's dosage, frequency, and duration and any potential side effects or precautions. Using practical examples and visual aids can help the patient better comprehend and adhere to the prescribed medication regimen.
- Patient Satisfaction: Effective healthcare communication is crucial in ensuring patient satisfaction. By actively listening to the patients, addressing their concerns, and involving them in decision-making, healthcare professionals can create a positive and supportive environment. Patient satisfaction improves the overall healthcare experience and contributes to better treatment outcomes.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

References

[1] Başol, E. (2018). Hasta İle Sağlik Çalişanlari (Doktor Ve Hemşire). *International Anatolia Academic Online Journal*, 76-93.
[2] Demir, A. (2019, April). *İletişimin Hasta Memnuniyetine Etkisi*.
[3] Du, L., Xu, J., Chen, X., Zhu, X., Zhang, Y., Wu, R., ... & Zhou, L. (2020). Rebuild doctor–patient trust in medical service delivery in China. *Scientific reports*, *10*(1), 21956.
[4] Varinli, İ. (2004). Hizmet Kalitesi, Değer, Hasta Tatmini Ve Davranişsal Niyetler Arasindaki İlişki-Kayseri'de Poliklinik Hastalarina Yönelik Bir Araştirma. *Erciyes Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, 1*(17), 33-52.
[5] Ratna Sari, D. (2021). Impact of Effective Communication on the Quality of Excellent Service and Patient Satisfaction in the Outpatient Department. *KnE Life Sciences*, 232-244.
[6] Norouzinia, R. A. (2015). Communication Barriers Perceived by Nurses and Patients. *Global journal of health science, 8*(6), 65-74.
[7] Popa-Velea, O. &. (2014). Issues of therapeutic communication relevant to improving quality of care. *Journal of Medicine and Life, 7* Spec No.4 (Spec ISS4), 39-45.
[8] Kim, S. S., Kaplowitz, S., & Johnston, M. V. (2014). The effects of physician empathy on patient satisfaction and compliance. *Evaluation & the Health Professions, 27*(3), 237-251.
[9] Neumann, M., Wirtz, M., Bollschweiler, E., Mercer, S. W., Warm, M., & Wolf, J. (2007). Determinants and patient-reported long-term outcomes of physician empathy in oncology: a structural equation modelling approach. *Patient Education and Counseling, 69*(1-3), 63-75.
[10] Hagiwara, N., Slatcher, R. B., Eggly, S., & Penner, L. A. (2013). Physician–patient communication and patient anxiety among women with abnormal mammograms. *Medical Care, 51*(12), 1065-1072.
[11] Street Jr, R. L., Makoul, G., Arora, N. K., & Epstein, R. M. (2009). How does communication heal? Pathways linking clinician–patient communication to health outcomes. *Patient Education and Counseling, 74*(3), 295-301.

[12] Betancourt, J. R., Green, A. R., Carrillo, J. E., & Ananeh-Firempong, O. (2003). Defining cultural competence: a practical framework for addressing racial/ethnic disparities in health and health care. *Public Health Reports, 118*(4), 293-302.
[13] Epstein, R. M., Franks, P., Fiscella, K., Shields, C. G., Meldrum, S. C., Kravitz, R. L., ... & Duberstein, P. R. (2015). Measuring patient-centered communication in patient-physician consultations: Theoretical and practical issues. *Social Science & Medicine, 61*(7), 1516-1528.
[14] Reeves, S., Pelone, F., Harrison, R., Goldman, J., & Zwarenstein, M. (2017). Interprofessional collaboration to improve professional practice and healthcare outcomes. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 6*, CD000072.
[15] Safer, J., Tang, T., & Cook, R. (2015). The importance of standardized communication in obstetrics. *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology, 58*(2), 427-433.
[16] Lau, J., Knudsen, J. L., Jackson, D. J., Farrow, V. A., & O'Connell, C. M. (2020). Use of digital health technologies in obstetrics and gynecology: A systematic review. *Obstetrics & Gynecology, 135*(4), 869-881.
[17] Stuebe, A. (2017). Should you Google your symptoms? JAMA, 318(6), 511-512.Dartiguelongue JB, C. P. (2021). Communication in health care teams. *Arch Argent Pediatr., 119*(6): e589-e593.
[18] Meterko, M., Mohr, D. C., Young, G. J., & Stolzmann, K. L. (2020). Teamwork culture and patient satisfaction in hospitals. *Medical Care, 58*(6), 547-554.
[19] Hannawa, A. F., Wu, A. W., Kolyada, A., Potemkina, A., & Donaldson, L. J. (2022, June). The aspects of healthcare quality that are important to health professionals and patients: A qualitative study. *Patient Education and Counseling, 105*, 1561-1570.
[20] Mosadeghrad, A. M. (2014). Factors influencing healthcare service quality. *International Journal of healthy policy and management, 3*(2), 77-89.
[21] Birkhäuer, J., Gaab, J., Kossowsky, J., Hasler, S., & Krummenacher, P. (2017). Trust in the health care professional and health outcome: A meta-analysis. *PloS One, 12*(2), e0170988.
[22] Siamatu, M. (2020). *An Analysis of The Effectiveness of The Communication Channels Used between Health Personnels And Patients*. Retrieved from Cavendish Repository: http://192.168.1.248:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/614

Authors



Hajrullah Latifi is a dedicated lecturer holding the position of Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Medicine, University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakovë, Kosovo. With a focus on medical education, he plays a crucial role in shaping the future of aspiring medical professionals. Hajrullah can be contacted via email at hajrullah.latifi@uni-gjk.org.



Drilon Latifi is a scholarly individual hailing from the College of Medicinal Science "Rezonanca" in Pristina, Kosovo. With a focus on medical studies, Drilon has demonstrated a commitment to academic excellence. For inquiries, Drilon can be reached via email at drilonlatifi0@gmail.com.