



THE SURVEY OF THE COMMUNICATION SKILLS AMONG ZAHEDAN MEDICAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY NURSING STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

nowadays, medical sciences education has experienced a shift from solely theoretical training to the acquisition of the human and communication skills and this is among the variables and qualifications judged in the determination of the competencies and abilities of the health and treatment workers. Therefore, the present study has been conducted with the objective of the survey of the communication skills among Zahedan medical sciences university nursing students. **Implementation method:** the present study is a descriptive-analytical research which has been conducted on 40 individuals from Zahedan medical sciences university term-8 nursing students all of whom have been busy schooling in 2016. To gather the information required for the present study a two-part questionnaire was used the first part of which was related to the demographic characteristics and the second part was pertained to the communication skills questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed by taking advantage of the SPSS 19 software and also by making use of the descriptive statistics, Pierson correlation tests and independent t-test. **Findings:** the students' average age was 22.58 ± 1.51 and out of the total number of the study population 21 individuals (48.8%) were women, 30 individuals (69.8%) were single. 18 individuals (41.9%) had an intermediate scoring ratio, 25 individuals (58.1%) had good scores and none of them were indicated to have had weak scorings. The relationship between age, gender and marital status with the communication skills and each of its components was not found to be statistically significant ($P > 0.05$). **Conclusions:** the results of the present study indicated that nursing students' communication skills is in an optimum level nut they can be enhanced further through planning educational programs.

KEYWORDS: communication skills, nursing students.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, teaching the medical sciences has turned away from purely theoretical teaching methodologies towards acquiring human and communication skills and this is the theme which is envisaged as the judgment standard in determining the health and treatment workers' abilities and qualifications.^[1] Therefore, communication skills have been described among the most significant features necessary for such occupations.^[2] Communicating with the patient is a process in which the patient and the nurse interact as the participants and each of them takes an active role in information exchange.^[3] No other job than the nursing occupation is in need of such a complicated communication skill.^[4] In this job, in order for an individual to play his or her role is shaped through communication.^[5] Establishing contact and communication with the others is the key for one's role

accomplishment in the occupation of nursing and in fact it is deemed as the base of the nursing profession regarding taking care of the patients.^[6] Communication is an interaction at least between two human beings the outcome of which would be a message which is sent and received for an objective to be met.^[7] "Communication skills" is a term which is used to refer to the behaviors by the aid of which the individual becomes capable of correctly expressing his or her affections and needs.^[8] Suikkala et al in a qualitative research dealt with the evaluation of the patients and nursing students' experiences regarding the relationships between university students and patients and they emphasized that training and evaluation of the students is based on their technical skills and according to the predetermined functions and the assigned predefined health care programs, as well.^[9] One of the most important factors related to the quality of the patients' care and safety is

the communication skills between the nurses and their patients^[10], in health care and treatment professions acquisition of the communication skills plays a considerable role in the exact prognostication of the disease, adoption of efficient and effective treatment strategies, patients' satisfaction and also removing the problems.^[11] Based on the ideas and notions proposed by this commission, the low level of communication between patient and nurse can be of great influence on the patient's safety. This commission has concluded that the patients are important information sources and in case of establishing communication with them there would be opened an opportunity for getting aware of the dangerous and risky situations which would otherwise result in maleficent consequences.^[12] Appropriate communication besides being enumerated as one of the very important needs for the patients, is considered as a very important aspect of the nursing caring services which would provide the nurses and health care service providers with highly valuable information regarding the patients; furthermore, this leads to understanding the patients' concerns and eventually brings about better understanding and empathy, better psychological and spiritual support, improving the physical, psychological and behavioral consequences and paving the way for the patients' comfort.^[13, 14]

Therefore, the current study aims at the investigation of the communication skills among Zahedan medical sciences university nursing students.

Implementation method

The current is a descriptive-analytical research in which it has been dealt with the survey of the communication skills in 40 people of the term-8 nursing students from Zahedan medical sciences university in 2016. To gather the information required for the present study a two-part questionnaire has been used the first part of which deals with the demographic characteristics (age, gender and marital status) and the second part deals with the communication skills questionnaire. The questionnaire contains 37 items which have been designed in three parts pertaining to the preliminary communication, health care communication and the managerial communication. The preliminary communication

dimensions includes 5 items pertaining to the evaluation of the students' abilities at the onset of the establishing the communication with the patient. The health care communication dimension incorporated 20 items which were related to the survey of the students' abilities in establishing communication with the patient and his or her family based on nursing process. The managerial communication dimension with 12 items dealt with the investigation of the students' capabilities in establishing communication with the nursing staff for offering and coordinating health care and treatment services to the patients. The students' capabilities rates have been shown in the form of a 4-item scale ranging from less than 30%, between 30% and 50%, between 50% and 70%, between 70% and 100% regarding each of the items. The scores ranging from 37 to 74 have been rated as weak, 74-111 showed intermediate scores and 111-148 have been considered as high. To determine the questionnaire validity there has been made use of content validity analysis. The instrument reliability assessment done through the internal stability method indicated that the Cronbach's alpha value has been ranging from 0.86 to 0.97 for various aspects and dimensions and it has been found as equal to 0.96 for the overall instrument in general.

After the data were collected by the use of SPSS 19 software they were analyzed by taking advantage of descriptive statistics, Pierson correlation and independent t-test.

Findings

The students' average age was 22.58 ± 1.51 and out of the total study population 21 individuals (48.8%) were women and 30 individual (69.8%) were single. 18 individuals (41.9%) of the university students had an intermediate score, 25 individuals (58.1%) showed a good score and none of the individuals had weak scores. The relationship between age, gender, and marital status with the communication scores was not statistically significant ($P > 0.05$).

The students' mean scores in communication scores and each of the studied fields have been presented in table (1).

Table 1: students' score means in communication skills and each of its fields

	Mean	Std. deviation	Maximum	Minimum
The total communication competency score	113.4651	16.51	144.00	80.00
Preliminary communication	14.6977	3.28	20.00	7.00
Care communication	59.2791	10.37	78.00	27.00
Managerial communication	39.4884	6.34	48.00	22.00

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed at the determination of the communication skills rates with the patients among the nursing students. In the current study, most of the studied units obtained mean scores ranging from intermediate to high in the communication skills field and this result is corresponding with the results obtained by the other

studies.^[15] Barati et al also investigated the communication skills rates among Hamedan medical sciences university nursing students for verbal, listening and feedback skills which were reported to be in an intermediate level.^[16] High communication skills levels enables the nurses to recognize the patients better and therefore they will be better capable of satisfying their

needs regarding supplying nursing health care services. The students' face-to-face communication makes them capable of acquiring a comprehensive and complete nursing history and this way they would be better able to comprehend the nurses' communicational role. To complete the information and documents regarding the patients' health history the nursing students should fully understand the communication techniques and put them into practical use.^[15] In this regard, McAllister expresses that, unlike the today's medical perspectives which concentrates on the patients' problem in its turn, the nurses should be substantially focusing on the human relations and the individuals' abilities and this should be in the form of the establishment of a well-willed affective relationship or emotional involvement and it constitutes the base of the problem-solving-oriented conversation. The nurses can easily manage the stress coming from establishing communication through getting familiar with the problem solving-oriented communication and develop greater tendencies to establish more effective and affective relationships and communications with the patients.^[17] Although the nursing students' communication skills have been in an optimum level, but they still have room to be further enhanced. Since the nurses in respect to the other treatment team members spend more time with the patients training them to achieve positive relationships with the patients and accordingly increasing the quality of the health care services they provide is of a considerable importance.^[18] It seems that the nursing student consider their communication with the patients exclusively as their job responsibilities and it is hoped that they will figure the importance of such a communication out more after getting experienced and they will learn about the sensitivity it has. Of course, the effects and importance of factors such as being interested and the students' attitude towards the treatment environments should not be ignored in such interactions.

There was not observed any significant relationship between individuals' demographic characteristics and communication skills. In the researcher's opinion, the married individuals exhibit higher venturing spirits in establishing communication with the others due to their higher level of self-esteem. And this is the theme behind their communication skills enhanced levels and it appears that such individuals have been found to have improved their communication capabilities as a consequent to their persistent interactions with their life partners and possibly this issue is a reason behind the increase in communication skills with the increase in age.

CONCLUSIONS

The results indicated that the nursing students' communication skills are in an optimum level yet they can be further improved through holding educational and training programs.

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