CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Exploring Factors that Motivate or Inhibit Nurse-to-Nurse Knowledge Sharing in Outpatient Settings.
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Introduction

Knowledge sharing (KS) is the "behaviour of disseminating one's acquired knowledge with other members within one's organisation" (Ryu et al., 2003, p. 113). The purpose of this research was to gain a better understanding of nurse-to-nurse knowledge sharing behaviours in an outpatient setting (community of practice) so that potential technological solutions could support the benefits and address weaknesses of current processes. The research was guided by the question: "What are the factors that motivate or inhibit knowledge sharing and knowledge capture for nurses working in an outpatient setting?"

Although knowledge sharing in healthcare is ubiquitous, a previous domain investigation (conducted for a patient data platform (PDP) development for a rare disease clinic) uncovered that no one system could manage all knowledge generated with large amounts (of knowledge) remaining undocumented. When knowledge is not recorded in a permanent or reusable form, it can be difficult to share among professionals who are separated by geography, speciality or time.

While the clinic in the original domain investigation had links to community, acute services and close ties to its equivalent in Europe, there was a relatively small pool of nurse participants (n=2). This research included a further four outpatient clinics for a total participant pool of n=17.

Although knowledge management difficulties apply to many healthcare professionals; this research focused on nursing as they form the largest number of workers in healthcare. Future studies should include other disciplines and interdisciplinary knowledge sharing.

Methodology

The study adopted an ethnographic approach. Participant-observation, field notes and semi-structured interviews were chosen as research methods. Interview transcriptions and field notes were coded using inductive reasoning using the framework described by Braun and Clarke (2006). A second researcher was used to ensure rigour. Nvivo software was used to manage data corpus.

Findings

The study identified how nurses share knowledge in a predominately oral world, both within and with those outside their units. While this method made knowledge capture difficult, it was preferred by participants as it was considered easy and allowed for 'back and forth' communication. Motivations to share knowledge

identified were: 'personal enjoyment', 'to improve patient outcomes', 'to avoid reinventing the wheel' and 'to make sense of an event'. Barriers discussed by participants were 'time limitations', 'limited by the type of platform used', 'limited by environment' and how nurses 'can't recall all they know'.

The data uncovered that knowledge generated was captured in official clinical and academic documents but it was also embedded in the environment and embodied in people working within the environment. While official documents are easier to share across borders and time, knowledge captured in the environment or people are more difficult to capture in a reusable form.