

Relation between Nurses' Communication Patterns and Psychological Distress among Patients on Mechanical Ventilation

Thesis

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By

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Abstract

Background: Communicating effectively with ventilator-dependent patients is essential to convey their basic physiological and psychological needs. **Aim:** This study aimed to examine the relation between nurses' communication patterns and psychological distress among patients on mechanical ventilation. **Design:** A descriptive exploratory design was utilized in this study. **Setting:** This study was carried out at cardiothoracic surgery intensive care unit and respiratory intensive care unit at Ain Shams University Hospital. **Subjects:** Convenient sample of all available nurses caring for patients on mechanical ventilation in the previously mentioned setting and purposive sample of adult, conscious and non sedated patients on mechanical ventilation. **Tools for data collection:** a) self administered questionnaire sheet to assess demographic data and nurses' knowledge b) Observational checklist to assess nurses' practice c) psychological scales to assess psychological distress (self-esteem, anxiety and depression) of patient. **Results:** 66.7% of the total number of nurses under study had satisfactory level of knowledge and 86.7% of the total number of nurses had unsatisfactory level of practice regarding communication with patients on mechanical ventilation. 33.3% of the total patients had normal self-esteem. 46.7% of the total patients had anxiety. 36.7% of the total patients had depression. **Conclusion:** there is relation between nurses' level of practice regarding communication patterns and psychological distress among patients on mechanical ventilation. **Recommendations:** Designing nurses' educational program to improve their practice for communication with mechanically ventilated patients.

Keywords: Communication patterns, Mechanical ventilated patients, Psychological distress.

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List of Abbreviations

Abb	Meaning
AAC	: Augmentative and Alternative Communication
B. Sc	: Bachelor of Science
ICU	: Intensive Care Unit
IV	: Intravenous
MV	: Mechanical Ventilation

Introduction

Communication is a vital element in nursing in all areas of activity that renders it feasible to exercise all its interventions, including prevention, therapy, rehabilitation, education and health promotion (**El-Soussi, Elshafey, Othman & Abd-Elkader, 2015**).

Effective communication is an essential component of the nursing role and when problems arise in the communication process, the patient is at risk. Four core skills are necessary for effective communication to occur; understanding communication from another's perspective, listening, emotional intelligence, and conflict management. Listening is the single most important skill for effective communication, because when a nurse neglects to listen to another member of the care team or to the patient, vital information can be lost and the safety of the patient can be jeopardized. By improving communication skills, nursing practice will improve and the safety of patients will increase (**Blizard, 2012**).

The use of an artificial airway for patients requiring mechanical ventilation produces the sudden loss of the spoken word, which makes communication difficult. Thus, communicating with intubated patients provides a challenge for

both medical and nursing staff who may struggle to meet the patients' psychological and comfort needs (**El-Soussi, Elshafey, Othman & Abd-Elkader, 2015; Cairo, 2016**).

Communication difficulties often prevent patients from expressing their opinions and, therefore, medical treatment decisions could be made without their knowledge. Furthermore, communication difficulties experienced by mechanically ventilated patients are reportedly associated with increased negative emotions and frustration levels (**Martinoh & Rodrigues, 2016**). According to **Hoorn, Elbers, Girbes and Tuinman (2016)** there is a significant relationship between the loss of speech and severe emotional reactions among intensive care unit (ICU) patients, such as a high level of frustration, stress, anxiety, depression, and low self esteem.

Communicating effectively with ventilator-dependent patients is essential so that various basic physiological and psychological needs can be conveyed and decisions, wishes, and desires about the plan of care and end-of-life decision making can be expressed. Numerous methods can be used to communicate, including gestures, head nods, mouthing of words, writing, use of letter/picture boards and common words or phrases tailored to meet individualized patients' needs (**Grossbach, Stranberg & Chlan, 2011**).

Significant of the study:

More than 2.7 million patients in intensive care units (ICUs) in the United States each year are unable to speak, in large part because of the presence of artificial airways and assisted ventilation (e.g, mechanical ventilation). Communication ability may be further impaired during critical illness by sedation, fatigue, delirium, or neurological disease. Communication difficulty is the most commonly reported distressing symptom for ICU patients receiving mechanical ventilation and is associated with anxiety, panic, anger, frustration, sleeplessness, and distress **(Happ, et al., 2011).**

The prevalence of communication impairments in patients who need mechanical ventilation is about 16 to 24%, causing significant psychological distress for the patients and making their participation difficult in treatment decisions **(Gomes, Aoki, Santos & Motter, 2016).**

Aim of the Study

This study aimed to examine the relation between nurses' communication patterns and psychological distress among patients on mechanical ventilation through the following:

- Assessment of nurses' knowledge regarding communication with patients on mechanical ventilation.
- Assessment of nurses' skills regarding communication with patients on mechanical ventilation.
- Assessment of psychological distress of patients on mechanical ventilation.

Research question:

To fulfill the aim of the study, the following research question was formulated:

- Is there a relation between nurses' communication patterns and psychological distress among patients on mechanical ventilation?

Review of Literature

Definition of communication:-

Communication is an integral part of life; without it, people would not survive. Verbal and non-verbal communication begins at birth and ends at death. People need communication not only to transmit information and knowledge to one another, but more importantly, to relate to one another as human beings around the world in the context of relationships, families, organizations, and nations (**Vertino, 2014**).

Communication is defined as a process during which information is shared through the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages, and where people create a relationship by interacting with each other. Communication is central to successful caring relationships and to effective team working (**Bramhall, 2014**). According to **Leifer (2012)** effective communication is an important nursing skill that is essential in promoting positive interpersonal relationships.

Effective communication requires an understanding of the patient and the experiences they express. To understand the patient only is not sufficient, but the nurse must also convey that the message he/she had sent is understandable and acceptable. Good communication between nurses and patients is essential for

the successful outcome of individualized nursing care of each patient. To achieve this, nurses must understand and help their patients by demonstrating courtesy, kindness and sincerity. Good communication also is not only based on the physical abilities of nurses, but also on their education and experience (**Kourkouta & papathanasion, 2014**).

Functions of communication:-

Function of communication refers to examining what the communication accomplishes rather than how the communication is structured. A relationship exists between communication structure and communication function in the sense that structure does affect function. As a part of human interaction, communication discloses information or provides a specific message, in some situation self-awareness may be achieved through communication, this function of communication involves interaction with people. Communication can also serve the important interpersonal function of conveying respect and giving or taking away power (**Giger, 2013**).

Communication process:-

The three elements of communication process are perception, evaluation, and transmission. Perception occurs when the sensory end organ of the receiver are activated. The impulse is transmitted to the brain. Human being mostly relies on visual and