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Examining Communication Skills among Female Nurses of Delhi: A Survey Study

Abstract : Communication is a very important life skill. A nurse with good communication skills can make any person comfortable and know their problem and the health issue they are facing. Communication skills of a nurse are very important as they interact with the patient as soon as they enter the hospital, and they are the bridge between the patient and the doctor. The communication skills of female health workers are expected to be sharper as women are expected to be more empathetic. The study focuses on knowing the communication skills of female nurses in Delhi hospitals. The researcher also digs deep to understand the importance of good communication among female nurses in Delhi. The study employs survey method to know the communication skills of the female nurses from the hospital in North-West District of Delhi. The researcher surveyed fifty nurses in Delhi and analysed the results obtained from the study. The findings suggest that the communication skills of female nurses are good in Delhi, and they stress on the importance of communication. The female nurses in Delhi prefer calm communication and are well trained for communication skills during their nursing course. The nurses are an important part of the health system in the country, and their communication skills are very important to

keep the health infrastructure in place.

Keywords. Communication Skills, Nurse, Patient, Health System

Introduction : Communication is a very important part of the healthcare system in the world. Satisfactory communication among all the stakeholders is very important for better health outcomes. Communication is also important as it reduces mistakes during the treatment, and it also increases the trust of the patient in the health system of the country. The nurses are the backbone of the health infrastructure as they interact with the patient more and act as a bridge between the doctor and the patient. The job of a nurse is not only to convey the medical information to the patient, but they also provide the patient and their families with emotional support and reassure them when they feel low. Many situations arise in hospitals where the patients and their families feel vulnerable. In such situations, the nurse guides them and provides them with support. Effective communication becomes very important for nurses in such vulnerable situations.

Female Nurses and the Healthcare System : Earlier studies have found that female nurses have better communication than male nurses do. A study by Kim and Lee (2018) found that the female nursing students scored far better than the male students in the listening test, which proves that the female nurses' communication skills of the female nurses

are better, as listening is also an important skill in communication. The better listener could provide with better solutions. Today the need and importance of communication skills has grown as the patients are more aware and they have more expectations from the health system as compared to the expectations before. The patients are also seeking better health services and expect that they will have patient listening from the nurse and the doctor's side. The communication skills of nurses should become better and they should be sensitive towards the cultural and religious sentiments of the patient. If the communication skills of the nurses are poor, then it will result in more errors in the medical process, and the dissatisfaction among the patients will increase. Effective communication between a nurse and a patient can improve treatment results, and the patient will also be more confident.

Female nurses are more in number than male nurses in India, and they are the backbone of the health infrastructure of the country. In India, it is believed that nursing is a female profession, and there are very few male students who choose nursing as their career option. The female nurses are expected to perform dual roles; they are expected to be the care providers, and they are also expected to give emotional support to the patients and their families. The communication

between a nurse and a patient is not limited to just giving the medication details, but also to giving emotional support and counselling to the patients. Nurses are also seen as the mediators between the patient and the doctor.

Health Infrastructure of Delhi : Delhi is the capital of India, and it has a wide network of hospitals, primary health centres and other healthcare facilities. The city has many types of healthcare institutions, like hospitals run by the central and state governments, private hospitals, and small clinics of doctors. Charitable healthcare facilities also exist in the healthcare ecosystem of Delhi. These hospitals and clinics cater to the population of Delhi, which is heterogeneous as there are people from diverse cultural, linguistic and educational backgrounds. The nurses in Delhi face challenges of communication, which are due to the socio-cultural diversity of patients. The other problems that the nurses in Delhi face are high patient footfall in civil hospitals and poor infrastructure. The high number of patients visiting hospitals in Delhi increases the work stress of the nurses, and it hampers their communication with the patients. The nurses also get less time to improve or reflect on their communication skills.

Importance and Challenges of a Female Nurse : A nurse is the most accessible and available health worker for the patient. They can share their health

problems more easily with the nurse than with a doctor. Patients are often seen approaching a nurse to understand the prescription by the doctor or a medical test result. They are also approached for medical advice by the patients. The female nurses are often expected that they will be more polite in their communication, and it is also believed that their emotional quotient will be higher than that of the male nurse. This is due to the gender biases and prejudices based on the societal notions of gender.

Health literacy also plays an important role in the communication between the nurse and the patient. Patients visiting civil hospitals in Delhi have low literacy levels and also have low health literacy, thus they seek more support from the nurse. Such patients have less understanding of the medical terms, and they cannot understand the treatment and hospital norms and seek support from the nurses. This also increases the responsibility of a nurse to care better, as the patients look up to them with a lot of expectation and respect.

Communication skills of female nurses are very important to provide patient-centred health treatment and infrastructure in India. Better communication skills among nurses will improve the medical results, and it will also give confidence to the nurses and will increase their work satisfaction.

Literature Review : Good communication skills are important for all the health workers and doctors. The female nurses are more skilled than male nurses in communication. In a study Al-Shammari and Al-Showaily (2024) found that the female nurses who have graduated recently have better and improved communication skills as compared to male nurses. They can make better relations with patients while they are recovering from their ailment. The female nurses also have more effective communication with the patients. A study found that female nurses have a very good pattern of communication. Effective communication is important for giving better and high standard of nursing care (Bharathi & Jothirajan, 2024).

Chatterjee and Choudhury (2011) in a study on communication effectiveness mentioned that it is important to have effective communication skills to work in the medical profession. The study also suggest that the doctors and the health workers should receive communication training through a structured program. The communication skills are important and required for communicating health related messages. Health communication is required to even organize small programs like blood donation camp for, which the health workers should be trained. The study also recognized language as a barrier in communication in diverse country like India. The health

workers are trained and are expert in the skills related to medical profession, which they have learned during their training. The health workers lack communication skills especially related to nonverbal communication and do not understand the nonverbal gestures of the patients. In studies, it was found that the health workers in India lack empathy in their communication and they are not able to tackle with the challenges, which patients with new diseases pose to them. It is noted that very few nurses are good listeners and the health workers do not patiently listen to the patients (Addo & Antwi, 2024)

The communication related to health between the health workers and patients are heavily influenced by the personal relations and the interaction between the health workers and the patients. Personal relations have an impact on the communication effectiveness of the patient-health worker interactions. It was observed that close relation between the health workers and the patients often raises problems in communication between them (Basiri et.al. 2019).

Objectives:

1. To examine the communication skills of female nurses in Delhi.
2. To understand the importance of good communication skills among female nurses.

Research questions:

1. What is the level of communication skills among female nurses in Delhi?
2. What is the importance of good communication skills for female nurses in Delhi?

Methodology : The study employed the survey method of research as the communication skills of the female nurses in Delhi's North West District are examined in this study. A sample of fifty nurses was selected through a convenience sampling method. The researcher in this study then collected the data through a semi-structured questionnaire. The study digs deep to understand the communication practices and challenges before the female nurses in Delhi.

Findings and Analysis : The findings and analysis reflect that the communication skills of the female nurses are satisfactory in Delhi. The nurses understand the importance of effective communication and try to strike a balanced and effective communication with the patients. The patients were asked eight questions on a Likert scale, and the answers obtained are analysed as follows:

1. Do you agree that effective communication is important for better treatment outcomes?

Response	Count	Total %*
Strongly Agree	30	60%
Agree	11	22%

Response	Count	Total %*
Neutral	5	10%
Disagree	4	8%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

The data suggest that female nurses weigh on the effectiveness of the communication, and they accept that it is important to have effective communication with the patient so that better health outcomes can be achieved. Out of the total respondents, 60% strongly agree that effective communication is important for better treatment outcomes, and 22% agree with the same. Only a small number 8% respondent disagree with the statement.

2. Do you explain the medication and treatment to the patients in clear and simple language?

Response	Count	Total %*
Strongly Agree	32	64%
Agree	15	30%
Neutral	3	6%
Disagree	0	0%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

The data obtained in the study suggests that the female nurses understand that a clear and simple

language explanation is important for the better understanding of medication and treatment by the patient. Nurses who strongly agree that they explain the medication and treatment to the patients in clear and simple language are 64% and those who agree are 30%, which reflects that the health workers try to simplify the information for the patient's ease.

3. Do you listen to the patient attentively when they explain their problem to you?

Response	Count	Total %*
Always	38	76%
Often	5	10%
Sometimes	7	14%
Rarely	0	0%
Never	0	0%

As discussed in the literature review, that the female nurses are better listeners, and the results of this study reflect the same. The majority of respondents 76% reported that they always listen to the patients attentively, and 10% often do so. Only a small number of female health workers 14% reported that they sometimes listen to the patient attentively. This shows that the female nurses are good listeners.

4. Do you show empathy and offer emotional support to the patients you treat?

Response	Count	Total %*
Always	23	46%
Often	17	34%
Sometimes	2	4%
Rarely	6	12%
Never	2	4%

The data suggest that female nurses in Delhi are available empathetically and emotionally for the patients during the time of their crisis. The nurses understand that empathy and emotional support are also important for effective communication. The data reveals that 46% female nurses always and 34% often show empathy and offer emotional support to the patients they treat and in vulnerable conditions. A small chunk of female nurses 6% reported that they rarely, and 4% reported that they never show empathy and offer emotional support to the patients. This could be because the workload management of these nurses might not allow them to be more empathetic and emotionally available for the patient.

5. Do you maintain a respectful and polite tone even when you are overburdened or stressed with work?

Response	Count	Total %*
Always	19	38%
Often	12	24%

Response	Count	Total %*
Sometimes	9	18%
Rarely	5	10%
Never	5	10%

The data suggests that the female nurses mostly maintain a respectful and polite tone even when they are overburdened or stressed with work. In some circumstances, they may lose their temper as 10% respondents reported that they never and 10% reported that they rarely maintain a respectful and polite tone, even when they are overburdened or stressed with work. This chunk of respondents needs better training and communication workshops to enhance their communication skills. The majority of respondents 38% reported that they always, and 24% reported that they often maintain a respectful and polite tone even when they are overburdened or stressed with work. This shows that the majority of health workers are polite and understand the value of effective communication.

6. Do you agree that effective communication between patient and nurse improves treatment results?

Response	Count	Total %*
Strongly Agree	30	60%
Agree	11	22%

Response	Count	Total %*
Neutral	6	12%
Disagree	3	6%
Strongly Disagree	0	0%

The data suggests that more than half 60% nurses strongly agree and 22% agree that effective communication between patient and nurse improves treatment results. This is also suggested in the review of literature. The female nurses with their experience in the field agree that effective communication between patient and nurse improves treatment results shows that communication is a very important part of the health sector. Only a small chunk 6% disagree that effective communication between patient and nurse improves treatment results.

7. Do you agree that heavy workload and time pressure affect the quality of communication?

Response	Count	Total %*
Strongly Agree	9	18%
Agree	7	14%
Neutral	25	50%
Disagree	4	8%
Strongly Disagree	5	10%

The data suggest that a small number of respondents strongly agree 18% and agree 14% that heavy workload and time pressure affect the quality of communication. This is still not negligible. This collectively is 32% which shows that proper time management and workload management practices should be adopted by the hospital management. A big chunk 50% stayed neutral to this question which show that more investigation and brainstorming on this issue is required.

8. Do you receive training to improve your communication skills as a nurse?

Response	Count	Total %*
Always	10	20%
Often	10	20%
Sometimes	18	36%
Rarely	7	14%
Never	5	10%

The data suggest that more training camps and workshops should be organised to improve the communication skills of the nurses. Only 20% nurses always and 20% nurses often receive training to improve their communication skills. A sizeable chunk 14% rarely and 10% never received training to improve their communication skills. This calls for more training sessions for nurses and

workshops which can train nurses for communication skills.

Conclusion : The literature review and the findings of the study suggest that the female nurses of Delhi are aware about the importance of communication in the healthcare sector. The female nurses are also aware about the importance of better communication skills. The communication skills of the female nurses in Delhi are good and at very few instances, they need improvement. The findings calls for more training and workshop sessions for the female nurses in Delhi. The nurses are trained in communication skills and it is improved with time and experience. As they interact more with the patients they witness new experiences and patients with various communication behaviour. These experiences make them more confident and equip them with better communication skills.

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