

ENHANCING NURSE-PATIENT COMMUNICATION: A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Background: Practical communication skills are imperative in nursing to ensure patient safety and comfort. Studies reveal that nurses often fail to implement therapeutic communication fully, resulting in dissatisfaction from beginning to end patient care. **Objective:** This study seeks to pinpoint strategies to enhance nurses' communication proficiency with patients. **Method:** Employing a systematic review approach, this research delved into journals archived in the EBSCO E. Journal, Elsevier Science Direct, Pubmed, CINAHL Complete, and Google Scholar databases, alongside nursing management and leadership literature. The operational definition encapsulates the endeavors undertaken by nurses to refine communication strategies with their patients. The study was conducted across diverse clinics and hospitals, encompassing all nurses within these settings, with the research sample comprising those lacking robust communication strategies. Data was gathered through the administration of questionnaires and the utilization of observation sheets. **Results:** Findings underscored that training initiatives bolstered nurses' confidence in delivering comprehensive patient care. Furthermore, culturally sensitive communication skill guides proved instrumental in augmenting nurse-patient communication and patient satisfaction. Moreover, tailored therapeutic communication programs designed for pediatric nurses yielded favorable outcomes, fostering secure and healthy interactions, nurturing trust, and expediting recovery. Short workshops emerged as another effective avenue for refining nurses' communication skills. Consequently, implementing training sessions, comprehensive guides, specialized programs, and brief workshops is pivotal in elevating communication between nurses and patients.

Keywords: Effective Communication, Nurses, Patients

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a dynamic and intricate process beyond simple information exchange; it is a transactional, symbolic exchange wherein individuals shape their environment by fostering relationships, influencing attitudes, and altering behaviors (Potter and Perry, 2021). Effective communication is paramount in professional nursing as the foundation for building rapport with clients and collaborating with healthcare colleagues to address patient needs and overcome challenges (Berman et al., 2021). Through effective communication, nurses can establish trust, provide emotional support, and empower patients to actively

participate in their care actively, ultimately enhancing patient outcomes and satisfaction. Moreover, effective communication among healthcare professionals ensures seamless care coordination and the delivery of holistic treatment approaches, reinforcing its critical role in providing high-quality, patient-centered care (Craven, 2016).

Therapeutic communication serves as a vital tool in helping clients navigate and articulate their emotional burdens, thereby alleviating anxiety and fostering a sense of emotional relief. However, nurse communication training becomes essential to employ therapeutic communication techniques.

Through structured training programs, nurses can develop and hone their communication skills, enabling them to engage in purposeful and empathetic interactions that promote patient recovery (Yusuf, 2019). Beyond its impact on individual patients, effective communication among healthcare professionals facilitates collaborative efforts, leading to improved client and family satisfaction (Bello, 2017). Moreover, as emphasized by (Suresh, 2016), communication is pivotal in elevating the overall quality of nursing services. Nurses who possess adept communication abilities, as highlighted by (Noviyanti et al., 2023), are adept at building meaningful connections with patients and their families, enhancing the overall patient experience, and contributing to positive health outcomes.

Around 72% of communication issues within healthcare settings are attributed to errors made by healthcare workers, as highlighted by (Hickey & Giardino, 2019). This statistic underscores a significant challenge in ensuring effective communication within healthcare teams. Notably, studies such as that by (Haugen, 2022) reveal a concerning trend in nurses' interpersonal communication skills, with 80% of respondents indicating subpar abilities. Despite this, patient satisfaction levels remain relatively high, surpassing 50%. However, as elucidated by (Alzahrani, 2021), a substantial portion of patients still experience moderate stress levels, suggesting potential gaps in the effectiveness of therapeutic communication provided by nurses.

Moreover, (Singh et al., 2019) shed further light on this issue, with 76.2% of patients expressing dissatisfaction due to perceived shortcomings in therapeutic communication skills. These findings underscore the critical importance of addressing communication deficiencies among healthcare professionals, particularly nurses, to enhance patient satisfaction and overall quality of care. The

data highlights a concerning deficiency in nurse therapeutic communication, with approximately 45.4% of cases showing lapses, notably during the termination stage, where the rate reaches 42.6%. Additionally, the failure to implement therapeutic communication during the orientation stage correlates significantly with patient dissatisfaction, reaching a rate of 61.9% (Alasad, 2015). These findings underscore the critical need to improve communication practices within healthcare settings. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) cited in (Hamendra, 2016), a staggering 70-80% of errors in healthcare stem from inadequate communication and understanding among team members. Effective teamwork is indispensable in addressing such issues and mitigating patient safety concerns. These insights emphasize the urgent necessity for healthcare professionals to prioritize effective communication strategies to enhance patient care outcomes and overall quality of service delivery (Hewison, 2017).

Achieving an effective communication process encompasses various factors crucial for successful interaction, as elucidated by (Bakhtiar & Duma, 2020). These factors include sensitivity to the recipient's needs, an understanding of symbolic meanings inherent in communication, timing ensuring messages are delivered at the most opportune moments, and establishing feedback mechanisms to promote mutual understanding and clarity. Moreover, prioritizing face-to-face interaction fosters deeper connections and ensures nuanced communication. Communication is a pivotal catalyst for driving change, as emphasized by (16), necessitating establishing a transparent, concise, and continuous communication system. Such a system enables effective dissemination of information, facilitates collaboration among team members, and enhances organizational responsiveness to evolving needs and challenges. In essence,

prioritizing these communication principles is essential for fostering meaningful interactions, facilitating change, and promoting organizational success.

Based on this background, the research Improving Nurse-Patient Communication: A Comprehensive Systematic Review of Effective Strategies is especially important because it consolidates evidence-based strategies to address the nuanced factors of effective communication within healthcare.

METHOD

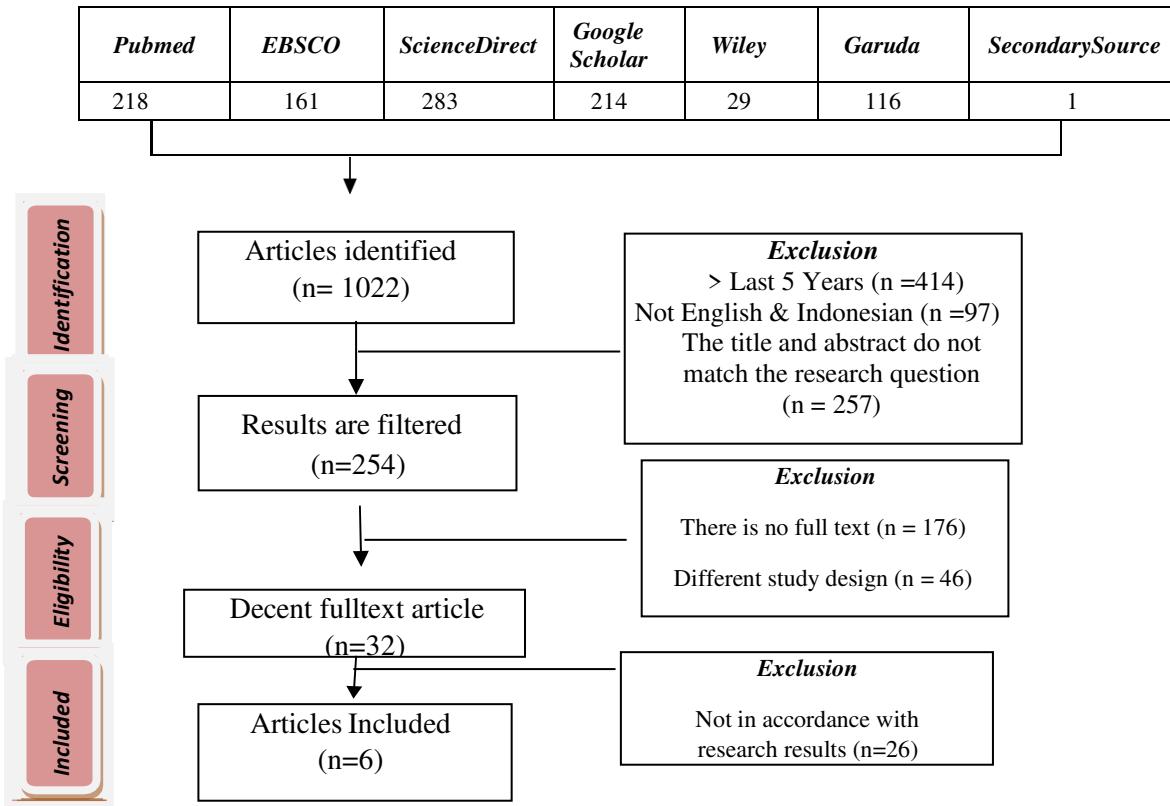
This systematic review methodology involved a thorough evaluation of research designs, encompassing a wide range of scientific journals featuring qualitative studies, case studies, and descriptive research. These studies were based on foundational evidence from primary data. The inclusion criteria for this review covered all research focused on improving nurse-patient communication. The literature search targeted publications within a specified timeframe and populations consisting of nurses and patients, utilizing databases such as PubMed, EBSCOhost, and ScienceDirect, which yielded 218, 161, and 283 journals, respectively. Additional searches on Google Scholar, Wiley, and Garuda were also conducted, filtered by publication dates from 2019 to 2024, resulting in 214,

Conducting this study through a systematic review allows for a rigorous and comprehensive synthesis of existing research, ensuring that the proposed strategies are robust, applicable, and relevant to diverse healthcare settings. This research is essential in providing healthcare professionals with a validated framework to enhance nurse-patient interactions, ultimately contributing to improved patient satisfaction, quality of care, and organizational success.

29, and 116 journals, respectively, using keywords like "effective communication," "improvement efforts," and "patient-nurse interaction."

Articles meeting the inclusion criteria were evaluated using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) to assess methodological rigor and relevance. Data extraction involved a thorough reading of research findings to capture essential details, including the study title, author names, publication year, journal publisher, research objectives, methodologies, and critical results. These details were systematically documented in a structured tabular format to facilitate clear understanding and analysis. This rigorous, systematic approach ensured that relevant data were accurately captured and organized for subsequent analysis and synthesis.

Figure 1. The inclusion process overview is depicted in the PRISMA Flow Diagram below:



RESULTS

Based on the analysis of the article, several efforts were found to improve effective communication among patient nurses, namely:

A. Training

Research conducted by Santosa & Ariyani (2020) highlights the consistently positive impact of training on nurses' communication skills. The evaluation results indicate that most participants, comprising 384 out of 401 (95.7%), strongly agreed that communication training enhanced their confidence in engaging with individuals experiencing distress. Furthermore, 366 out of 401 participants (91.2%) expressed willingness to converse with and address the emotional needs of patients. Moreover, 376 out of 401 participants (93.7%) strongly agreed that the training would positively influence nursing practice. The evaluation questionnaire also revealed high ratings for safety standards during training sessions, with 92% of participants rating them as

very good. Additionally, 94% of participants strongly affirmed that the training bolstered their confidence in providing intensive patient care, and a similar percentage expressed readiness to engage with individuals facing emotional challenges. Overall, the findings underscore the substantial impact of communication training on nurses' abilities and attitudes, suggesting significant improvements in patient care and nursing practice.

In a study conducted by Murdiany (2021), 325 United States cancer center nurses participated in a Communication Skills Training (CST) module to enhance empathetic responses to patients. Pre- and post-training assessments using standardized patient assessments (SPA) revealed notable improvements in various

aspects. Results indicated high satisfaction among nurses with the module, with agreement or strong agreement reported for 92.5%-99.75% of satisfaction items. Moreover, nurses exhibited a significant increase in self-efficacy in responding empathetically post-training, alongside demonstrated improvements in empathy skills as assessed by SPA. Furthermore, a substantial proportion of nurses (90.44%) reported feeling confident in applying the acquired skills post-training, with a notable

increase in the utilization of specific empathic skills observed (82.64%). Overall, the study findings underscore the feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness of the CST module in enhancing nurse-patient communication and fostering patient-centered care. Highlights the potential of targeted interventions, such as the CST module, to address communication challenges and promote empathetic interactions within healthcare settings.

B. A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Communication Skills

In the (Aronowitz et al., 2017) study, an equal number of male and female nurses were inadvertently included in both groups, inadvertently balancing the gender representation. The intervention group demonstrated significantly improved communication skills, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.00 and an alpha of 0.05 (5%). These results were delineated across various phases outlined in communication guidelines. In the "Ready" phase, nurses underwent preparation sessions emphasizing awareness of Southeast Asian cultural values, such as gender-specific norms, to enhance client comfort and understanding of the client's family intentions in clinical decision-making. Secondly, during the "Greeting" phase, nurses focused on building trust and demonstrating respect within the Southeast Asian cultural context, where clients may be hesitant to express concerns directly, relying instead on subtle non-verbal cues. The "Invite" phase encouraged nurses to explore clients' feelings and physical complaints while acknowledging that affirmative responses may not always reflect actual agreement within the cultural context. Lastly, in the "Discuss" phase, nurses completed tasks while respecting client expectations and promoting two-way communication, especially in the context

of complementary alternative medicine (CAM), prevalent in Southeast Asian societies. It was emphasized that CAM should complement rather than overshadow modern medicine, with nurses remaining aware of the influence of the client's family in clinical decision-making, ensuring that client autonomy is respected.

The simulation results revealed distinct differences between the untrained and intervention groups. In the untrained group, eight red bands indicated very dissatisfied responses, five yellow bands denoted dissatisfaction, four green bands represented satisfaction, and three blue bands indicated delighted responses. Conversely, the intervention group exhibited predominantly positive outcomes, with 14 green and six blue bands signifying satisfaction and delighted responses, respectively. These findings underscore the efficacy of the research intervention, which focused on enhancing nurse communication skills with clients. Notably, the intervention improved nurses' communication proficiency, personal satisfaction, and self-confidence post-training. Overall, the intervention group, which received culturally sensitive communication skills training, attained higher scores than the control group, highlighting the significance of tailored training programs in enhancing nurse-client interactions and overall satisfaction.

C. Planned Therapeutic Communication Program

The research conducted by (Rørtveit et al., 2020) revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between nurses' total knowledge scores and total practice scores concerning therapeutic communication skills at each measurement time, both pre-and post-training (pre: $r = 0.54$, $p < .002$; post: $r = 0.56$, $p < .004$). Additionally, a substantial increase in pediatric nurses' knowledge, practice, and skills related to therapeutic communication was observed ($p < .002$). The study

concluded that implementing a planned therapeutic communication program significantly enhanced pediatric nurses' knowledge and skills in communicating with hospitalized pediatric patients. Introducing advanced therapeutic communication programs tailored for pediatric nurses aims to foster safe and healthy interactions, cultivate trust, and enhance the recovery process for hospitalized children, ultimately yielding therapeutic benefits for the patients under their care.

D. Mini Workshops

(Al-Hussami, 2017) research in 2017 involved conducting therapeutic communication training for new nurses through a mini workshop. The study aimed to assess the workshop's effectiveness in enhancing nurses' therapeutic communication skills. The results indicated a notable improvement in nurses' communication abilities post-training, with 36 out of 50 respondents (72%) demonstrating proficiency in therapeutic

communication. Conversely, 14 respondents (28%) exhibited inadequate therapeutic communication skills. These findings underscore the positive impact of therapeutic communication training workshops in equipping new nurses with the necessary skills to communicate with patients effectively. By improving nurses' communication competence, such workshops enhance patient care experiences and overall healthcare outcomes.

DISCUSSION

A. Training

The SAGE and THYME communication training models have proven highly effective, providing invaluable guidance and training to nurses in patient-centered care. These models emphasize the importance of respecting patients and addressing their concerns and needs. Through the implementation of the SAGE & THYME communication model training, nurses have gained confidence in effectively engaging with patients experiencing depression, anxiety, and various other challenges. This training enhances nurses' basic communication skills and aids in end-of-life discussions and life care planning for patients. The quality of the training is consistently evaluated, and positive feedback from nurses has been garnered, indicating its efficacy in improving therapeutic

communication skills. By fostering better communication between nurses and patients, particularly in therapeutic contexts, these models play a crucial role in positively influencing patients' psychological well-being and facilitating healing.

Research conducted by (Murdiany, 2021) showcased the success of implementing a communication skills training program for nurses at a prominent cancer center. The program received favorable evaluations from most nurse participants ($>85\%$) across various modules, indicating strong support for its effectiveness. Notable improvements were observed in nurses' self-efficacy concerning communication with patients in diverse contexts, alongside significant enhancements in empathy and clarification skills. Particularly noteworthy were the substantial gains in empathic

communication skills as evidenced by standardized patient assessments (SPA) conducted before training. A logical progression of this research would involve extending the communication skills training to outpatient oncology nurses and comparing their skill utilization. The study revealed that empathy skills were paramount in oncology nursing, underscoring the significance of such training initiatives for improving communication between nurses and patients/families within oncology settings. Highlights the potential of communication skills training programs for oncology nurses and other healthcare providers in fostering effective communication and patient-centered care.

Previous research unequivocally demonstrates the myriad benefits of

effective communication in healthcare settings, spanning improved patient recovery rates, enhanced pain control, greater adherence to treatment regimens, enhanced psychological functioning, and overall quality of life. Conversely, ineffective communication can harm nurses, leading to heightened stress levels, diminished job satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion. Recognizing the pivotal role of communication in nursing practice, providing communication skills training emerges as a valuable investment for hospitals. Such training equips nurses with essential skills and fosters their enthusiasm to fulfill their duties and responsibilities effectively. By prioritizing communication skills development, hospitals can enhance patient care outcomes and the well-being of their nursing staff.

B. A Guide to Culturally Sensitive Communication Skills

Research conducted by (Aronowitz et al., 2017) underscores the efficacy of training programs utilizing culturally sensitive communication skills guides in enhancing nurses' communication skills and subsequently improving client satisfaction. Nurses who underwent training based on these guidelines demonstrated greater sensitivity and proficiency in communication with clients than their untrained counterparts, as assessed through objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE) involving observers and simulated clients. The training plan incorporated various components, beginning with team formation and introduction, followed by interactive sessions involving drama/role-play scenarios simulating primary care clinic and home settings. Feedback and reflection sessions encouraged participants to reflect on and apply communication skills within socio-cultural contexts, further reinforced by supporting information about nurse-client guidelines provided in interactive lectures. Post-training role-play exercises aimed to

consolidate learned skills, with a follow-up period of 4 days allowing for learning retention. This approach ensured that training effects extended beyond short-term memory, as emotional responses elicited during training sessions with simulated patients facilitated long-term memory consolidation. Such comprehensive training interventions enhance nurses' communication abilities and contribute to sustained improvements in client care practices.

In the context of the ideal objective and structured clinical examination (OSCE), typically comprising 6 to 12 stages, our study opted for a 7-stage OSCE setup. The selection of seven stages was deliberate, considering factors such as the number of observers involved, the availability of trained simulation clients, and the volume of respondents participating. Observers, consisting of seven clinical instructors, rated the nurses without knowledge of their training status. These observers had extensive experience conducting OSCEs spanning over three years at the research institution, ensuring familiarity with OSCE methodologies. Before the OSCE sessions, the study

authors conducted a 2-hour briefing for observers, equipping them with a checklist adapted from the Gadjah Mada nurses' communication skills guidelines. Additionally, researchers meticulously prepared patient simulations for the seven scenarios designed to elicit "culturally sensitive communication skills" from the nurses. Each simulation patient was assigned colored bands indicative of their satisfaction level with the nurse's communication at each stage of the OSCE, ranging from red (very dissatisfied) to blue (very satisfied). Both intervention and control group nurses underwent assessment across all OSCE stages, interacting with all observers. Informal discussions between nurses from the intervention and control groups were strictly prohibited before assessment time to prevent any potential influence. Significant discrepancies between the intervention and control groups were observed across all communication sessions. The robustness of this study lies in the culturally sensitive communication skills plans and guidelines employed, which offer nuanced insights into addressing cultural aspects related to health issues. These guidelines are adept at sensitively addressing cultural nuances within the context, particularly concerning potential unresolved health problems

linked to non-personnel communication styles, effectively demonstrated during role-play exercises.

Grounded in comprehensive feedback sessions, nurses have the opportunity to recognize the imperative for culturally sensitive communication skills among healthcare providers, particularly nurses. Communication skills training, such as the one implemented in this study, which emphasizes cultural communication proficiency, holds significant potential for enhancing nursing care, especially for racial, ethnic, and minority populations, as communication serves as the conduit for transmitting and upholding culture. Nurses who underwent training based on the Gadjah Mada nurse communication skills guidelines exhibited superior performance and demonstrated heightened cultural sensitivity in their communication with clients compared to their untrained counterparts, as evaluated by observers and simulated clients in an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE). It underscores the importance of incorporating nurse communication skills guidelines into nurses' preparation for caring for Southeast Asian patients, potentially enhancing client satisfaction and overall quality of care.

C. Planned Therapeutic Communication Program

(Rørtveit et al., 2020) Research highlights a notable increase in pediatric nurses' knowledge and skills concerning therapeutic communication with hospitalized children after participating in a structured therapeutic communication program. The study employed two assessment tools: a Therapeutic Communication Structured Questionnaire and a Likert Scale Structured Performance Checklist. The former consisted of a socio-demographic questionnaire capturing nurses' background information and a knowledge questionnaire comprising eight questions assessing their understanding of

therapeutic communication skills. The latter, the Likert scale checklist, aimed to evaluate nurses' practical improvement in therapeutic communication through observation, encompassing 42 items divided into three categories: nurses' quality regarding therapeutic communication skills, their communication skills during hospital admission, and their communication skills during nursing care provision. The scoring system employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Always" to "Never". The study advocates for the continued implementation of advanced therapeutic communication programs tailored for pediatric nurses to enhance safe and healthy interactions,

foster trust, and expedite the recovery of hospitalized children. Moreover, the research suggests that repeated testing, specifically test-retest reliability analysis, underscores the positive impact of communication training on nursing skills acquisition, ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes. It aligns with other studies focusing on developing and evaluating communication skills training programs for cancer nurses, affirming the

D. Mini Workshops

Research conducted by (Al-Hussami, 2017) focused on a mini workshop facilitated by the Head of the Department, aimed at guiding nurses on therapeutic communication strategies from the pre-interaction phase to the termination phase. Participants were tasked with implementing action plans designed to enhance their communication skills after the workshop. Subsequently, the researcher evaluated nurses' communication proficiency, rating their performance as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. After implementation, nurses were interviewed to identify any obstacles or challenges during therapeutic communication. Many nurses faced difficulties during the orientation phase, mainly when introducing themselves, while others struggled to maintain communication during procedures. The researcher delved deeper into these challenges, aiming to provide assistance and support where needed. These findings underscore the hospital's commitment to delivering quality nursing services, exceeding patient expectations, and fostering trust in the facility. Effective communication is crucial in nursing practice, potent for influencing human behavior and fostering trust and comfort in client interactions. As primary healthcare providers, nurses play a vital role in patients' psychological well-being and overall satisfaction. Possessing therapeutic

efficacy of such programs in enhancing nurses' communication abilities in patient care contexts. Consequently, well-designed communication skills training programs prove instrumental in enhancing pediatric nurses' communication skills, reinforcing fundamental communication practices, facilitating the acquisition of new communication skills, and ensuring heightened patient satisfaction through improved communication practices.

communication skills facilitates trust-building with clients, mitigates legal issues, enhances professional satisfaction, and bolsters the profession's and hospital's reputation.

Interpersonal communication training encompasses a series of programs designed to enhance nurses' interpersonal communication skills, focusing on fostering positive attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge related to communication. Given the pivotal role of interpersonal communication in nursing practice, these training initiatives aim to bolster nurses' abilities in this area, recognizing its significance in shaping attitudes and improving service quality. Effective communication forms the bedrock of nursing care, facilitating meaningful connections between nurses and patients and ultimately influencing the overall quality of healthcare delivery. Competencies such as interpersonal communication skills, non-verbal communication, professionalism, and counseling are essential for nurses when interacting with patients. Through mini workshops and similar initiatives, nurses can receive guidance on fulfilling their duties and responsibilities while delivering optimal care through effective communication, thereby contributing to the patient's recovery process and ensuring satisfaction with nursing services.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The quality of communication among professional nurses is strongly linked to patient satisfaction, underscoring the importance of nurses possessing effective communication patterns, strategies, and skills. This research underscores the necessity for nurses to acquire these competencies through formal professional channels, as they significantly impact the satisfaction levels of the patients under their care. An evidence-based literature review highlights various avenues for enhancing nurse-patient communication, including communication training initiatives, developing culturally sensitive communication guides, planned therapeutic communication programs, and participating in mini-workshops. These efforts are crucial for equipping nurses with the necessary tools to engage effectively with patients, fostering positive patient experiences and outcomes. The

findings of this research hold promise for informing policymakers in government settings, hospital leaders, and nursing education institutions about the importance of developing and implementing communication strategies. These strategies can be enhanced through various training initiatives, creating culturally sensitive communication guides, planned therapeutic communication programs, and organizing mini-workshops. The anticipated outcomes of this research extend to providing valuable insights for future studies aimed at improving effective nurse-patient communication within leadership management services in nursing, particularly in Indonesia. These insights can serve as a reference point for further exploration and development of communication practices within healthcare settings, ultimately contributing to enhanced patient care and satisfaction.

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