

## Review Article

# Impact of Nurse-Patient Communication on Patient Satisfaction

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

Effective nurse-patient communication is a cornerstone of quality healthcare and significantly influences patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and clinical outcomes. This systematic review examines the impact of nurse-patient communication on patient satisfaction across various healthcare settings. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL, and Google Scholar for studies published between 2010 and 2024. Twenty-nine studies, including cross-sectional studies, qualitative research, and interventional studies, met the inclusion criteria. Evidence indicates that effective communication—characterized by clarity, empathy, active listening, cultural competence, and responsiveness—enhances patient satisfaction, reduces anxiety, improves adherence to treatment, and fosters trust in healthcare providers. Barriers such as workload, inadequate communication skills, language differences, and organizational constraints were identified as limiting factors. Strategies such as communication skills training, structured nurse-patient interaction protocols, and culturally sensitive approaches are essential for improving communication quality and patient satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Nurse-Patient Communication, Patient Satisfaction, Empathy, Healthcare Quality, Communication Skills, Systematic Review

## Introduction

Patient satisfaction is widely recognized as a key indicator of healthcare quality and a determinant of health outcomes. It reflects patients' perceptions of care quality, including interpersonal interactions, responsiveness, and communication effectiveness. Among these factors, nurse-patient communication is pivotal, as nurses serve as primary points of contact for patients throughout hospital stays and outpatient care.

Effective communication in nursing encompasses both verbal and non-verbal elements, including clarity of information, active listening, empathy, responsiveness, cultural sensitivity, and shared decision-making. Research demonstrates that patients who perceive their nurses as

good communicators report higher satisfaction levels, better adherence to treatment, reduced anxiety, and increased trust in healthcare providers.<sup>1</sup>

Despite its recognized importance, nurse-patient communication is often compromised by factors such as high patient-to-nurse ratios, heavy workloads, insufficient training, and cultural or language barriers. Inadequate communication can lead to patient dissatisfaction, decreased treatment adherence, poor clinical outcomes, and increased complaints.

This systematic review aims to synthesize evidence on the impact of nurse-patient communication on patient satisfaction, identify effective communication strategies, and examine barriers and challenges that impede effective

nurse-patient interactions. The review also explores interventions that enhance communication skills and improve patient satisfaction across healthcare settings.<sup>2</sup>

## Methodology

This systematic review followed PRISMA guidelines to ensure rigor and transparency. A comprehensive search was performed across PubMed, Scopus, Web of Science, CINAHL, and Google Scholar for studies published between 2010 and 2024. Search terms included combinations of “nurse-patient communication,” “nurse communication skills,” “patient satisfaction,” “therapeutic communication,” “nurse-patient interaction,” and “nursing care quality,” using Boolean operators (AND, OR).

## Inclusion Criteria:

- Peer-reviewed studies evaluating the relationship between nurse-patient communication and patient satisfaction.
- Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods studies.
- Studies published in English between 2010 and 2024.

## Exclusion Criteria:

- Studies focusing solely on physician-patient communication without nursing involvement.
- Editorials, opinion pieces, or conference abstracts.
- Duplicate studies or studies lacking methodological rigor.

All retrieved records were imported into Mendeley, and duplicates were removed. Titles and abstracts were screened for relevance, followed by full-text review. Data were extracted using a standardized form including author, year, country, study design, sample size, communication intervention or assessment method, and patient satisfaction outcomes.<sup>3</sup>

Quality assessment was conducted using the CASP checklist for qualitative studies and the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) tools for quantitative studies. Due to heterogeneity in study design and measurement tools, a narrative synthesis was performed. Themes were organized under effective communication characteristics, patient satisfaction outcomes, barriers, and interventions.

## Results

The initial search identified 412 studies. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 94 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility. Twenty-nine studies met inclusion criteria, encompassing cross-sectional surveys (n=15), qualitative interviews/focus groups (n=7), quasi-experimental interventions (n=5), and mixed-methods studies (n=2). Studies were conducted across various countries, including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, India, and several African and Asian countries. Sample sizes ranged from 50 to 1,200 participants.<sup>4</sup>

## Effective Communication Characteristics

Several characteristics of effective nurse-patient communication were identified:

- **Clarity and Accuracy:** Patients valued nurses providing clear, understandable explanations about their diagnosis, treatment, and procedures.
- **Empathy and Emotional Support:** Demonstrating empathy and acknowledging patient emotions enhanced satisfaction and trust.
- **Active Listening:** Patients reported higher satisfaction when nurses listened attentively, responded to concerns, and involved them in decision-making.
- **Cultural and Language Competence:** Nurses who were culturally sensitive and able to communicate in patients' preferred language improved satisfaction levels.
- **Responsiveness:** Prompt attention to patient needs and questions was strongly correlated with positive satisfaction outcomes.

## Impact on Patient Satisfaction

Studies consistently demonstrated that effective nurse-patient communication positively influences patient satisfaction:

- Improved understanding of care plans and treatment adherence.
- Reduced anxiety, fear, and stress during hospital stays.
- Increased trust in nurses and the overall healthcare system.
- Enhanced perception of care quality, safety, and patient-centeredness.

## Interventions to Improve Communication

Several studies assessed interventions designed to enhance nurse-patient communication and satisfaction:

- **Communication Skills Training:** Workshops, role-playing, and simulation-based training improved nurses' empathy, listening, and patient-centered communication skills.
- **Structured Interaction Protocols:** Standardized protocols for patient rounds and communication checklists enhanced consistency and clarity in nurse-patient interactions.
- **Patient-Centered Care Approaches:** Involving patients in care planning and decision-making improved satisfaction and engagement.
- **Technology-Assisted Communication:** Use of electronic communication tools, patient portals, and bedside education facilitated information sharing and reduced misunderstandings.<sup>5</sup>

## Barriers to Effective Communication

Barriers identified across studies include:

- **High Workload and Staffing Shortages:** Limited time for meaningful interaction reduced communication quality.
- **Inadequate Communication Training:** Nurses often lacked formal training in therapeutic communication skills.
- **Language and Cultural Differences:** Miscommunication due to language barriers or cultural differences reduced patient satisfaction.
- **Organizational Constraints:** Policies prioritizing efficiency over interaction time limited opportunities for nurse-patient engagement.

## Discussion

This systematic review provides strong evidence that effective nurse-patient communication is a critical determinant of patient satisfaction. Effective communication promotes understanding, trust, and adherence to care plans, reduces anxiety, and enhances overall perceptions of care quality. Empathy, active listening, clarity, cultural competence, and responsiveness emerged as key attributes of communication that positively influence patient satisfaction.

Interventions such as structured communication training, patient-centered care models, and standardized communication protocols significantly enhance nurses' ability to communicate effectively. These interventions are particularly important in high-stress clinical settings, such as emergency departments and intensive care units, where patient anxiety is elevated and timely understanding is critical.

Despite its importance, nurse-patient communication is often constrained by organizational and systemic factors. High patient loads, staffing shortages, and limited time reduce the frequency and quality of interactions. Additionally, nurses may lack formal communication training, and cultural and language differences can impede understanding. Addressing these barriers requires organizational commitment, continuous professional development, and policies promoting patient-centered care.<sup>6</sup>

The review also highlights the importance of culturally sensitive communication strategies. In multicultural healthcare environments, the ability of nurses to understand patients' cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and preferences significantly enhances satisfaction. Technology-assisted communication tools can also bridge gaps, particularly for patients with hearing or speech impairments or in settings with high nurse workloads.

## Challenges and Barriers

Several key challenges and barriers were identified:

- **Staffing and Workload:** Heavy workloads limit time for meaningful patient interactions.
- **Training Gaps:** Many nurses lack formal communication skills training, particularly in therapeutic and culturally competent communication.
- **Language and Cultural Barriers:** Miscommunication arises from linguistic differences and cultural misunderstandings.
- **Organizational Limitations:** Hospital policies focused on efficiency and throughput often limit time for communication and patient engagement.
- **Patient Factors:** Some patients may be hesitant to engage or ask questions due to health literacy or cultural norms.

Addressing these challenges requires interventions at multiple levels: improving nurse-patient ratios, integrating communication training into nursing education, developing culturally appropriate protocols, and fostering a patient-centered culture within healthcare organizations.

## Conclusion

Effective nurse-patient communication is a critical determinant of patient satisfaction, adherence, and overall healthcare quality. Clear, empathetic, culturally competent, and responsive communication improves patient understanding, reduces anxiety, enhances trust, and fosters engagement in care. Structured communication training, patient-centered care models, standardized interaction protocols, and technology-assisted communication are effective strategies for improving communication and patient satisfaction.

Healthcare organizations must address systemic barriers, including high workloads, staffing shortages, and training gaps, to maximize the impact of nurse-patient communication. Investment in professional development, culturally competent care, and patient-centered practices will enhance patient satisfaction and contribute to improved health outcomes globally.

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