

Original Research Article

Communication skills and its related factors in Ardabil Alavi Hospital nurses and staff

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ABSTRACT

Background: Communication skills (CS) is an important topic which help the nurses and staff to maintain effective relationships and have professional standards in all legal, ethical and clinical areas. So low level of CS between nurses could be led to more medical mistakes and reduce the patient's quality of care. The aim of this study was to determine the level of CS among Ardabil teaching hospitals nurses and staff and its related factors.

Methods: This descriptive-analytical study was conducted on 145 Ardabil Alavi hospitals' nurses and staff from May 2019 to November 2019. The data collection tool was communication skills questionnaire of Burton G (1990) which included demographic data and interpersonal communication skills test (18 items) with a range of 18-90. Data analyzed in SPSS version 21 by using descriptive and analytical statistics tests such as; Spearman, Mann-Whitney U, and Kruskal Wallis at significant level of $p < 0.05$.

Results: Of all students, 72.4% were women and the rest were men. The average age of participants, was 36.9 ± 8.4 years. The mean score of total communication skills was calculated 59.2 ± 7.3 . The mean score of verbal skill, listening skill, and feedback skill were calculated in order to 20.8 ± 3.43 , 17.6 ± 4 , and 20.7 ± 3.2 , respectively. Total Communication skills was significantly related with past work experience but other demographic variables hadn't significant relation with CS.

Conclusions: The results indicated that the CS of Ardabil hospital nurses and staff were in moderate levels. So, providing training programs for raising their CS in future is essential.

Keywords: Communication skill, Feedback, Listening, Nurses

INTRODUCTION

Communication is one the factors for development of relations between more persons which take place by listening and speaking and its feedback and could be have an important role in the treatment, prognosis of diseases and increasing the satisfaction of patients in hospitals.¹ Ability for having good communication with other persons is one of the best characteristics of all persons who work in health system.¹

Communication skills (CS) are divided into three categories of verbal, listening, and feedback skills.²

Effectively communication with others is more important for the patient's care and particularly is one of the requirements of nursing profession during special circumstances such as serious illness, and end of life care. Regarding to their close relationship with the patients in all critical periods of time, the nurses could be having an important role in changing the patient's perception

towards the disease and monitoring it with making efficient and effective connections.³⁻⁵

Also, by having success CS, we could have better outcomes such as better diagnosis of disease, decreasing medical errors, improving the course of the disease, patient and physician satisfaction. Because the level of CS about treatment and prognosis of diseases and hearing the patient questions and answer them among medical staff and nurses were in low level.^{4,5} Also, presenting strengths and weaknesses of CS among medical staff and hospital nurses could be very important for promotion quality of care, increased the patient satisfaction and reduce the treatment costs in future and so, having effective communication between hospital staff and patients will improve their clinical performance and promote their educational and therapeutic goals.⁶

Due to lack of more studies about CS among hospital staff and nurses and also due to the important role of CS in clinical process, the aim of this study was to determine the level of Communication skills among Ardabil teaching hospitals nurses and staff and its association with demographic characteristics.

METHODS

Study design

This descriptive-analytical study was conducted on 145 Ardabil Alavi Hospitals' nurses and staff from May 2019 to November 2019.

Selection criteria

Participants with at least two years' work experience in hospital and graduated from university were included in the study. All of samples complete the consent form before entry to the study.

Data collection method

The data collection tool was communication skills questionnaire which included demographic data and interpersonal communication skills test (18 items) with a range of 18-90. The dimension of CS questionnaire was verbal, Listening and Feedback and options for each item defined as complete disagree, almost disagree, not-sure, almost agree and completely agree with scores 1 to 5, respectively. The range of each dimension was in range 6-30. All patients after getting orally consent, completed the questionnaire. The validity and reliability of questionnaire was checked before in study of Burton et al in 1990. Also, this questionnaire was used in a local study in Iran, Guilans in year 2015.^{7,8}

Statistical analysis

Collected data were analyzed in SPSS version 21 by using descriptive and analytical statistics tests such as;

Spearman, Mann-Whitney U, and Kruskal Wallis at significant level of $P < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Of all participants, 72.4% were women and the rest were men. The average age and past work experience among participants were 36.9 ± 8.4 and 10.6 ± 9.6 years respectively. Of all participants, 26.9% were single and 73.1% were married (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic data of all students.

Variables	N	%	
Sex	F	105	72.4
	M	40	27.6
Job employee condition	Formal	69	47.6
	Contractual	29	20
	Short time	28	19.3
	Arbitrary	19	13.1
Marital status	Single	39	26.9
	Marriage	106	73.1
Age (years)	Mean±SD	36.9±8.4	
Past work experience (years)	Mean±SD	10.6±9.6	

Table 2: Relation between the mean of total communication skill and demographic variables.

Variables	Mean±SD	P value	
Sex	M	59.7±8	0.59
	F	59±7	
Job employee condition	Formal	60.2±6.7	0.084
	Contractual	7.7±1.4	
	Short time	8±1.5	
	Arbitrary	6.7±1.5	
Marital status	Single	58±7.5	0.24
	Marriage	59.6±7.2	

Table 3: The mean score of three dimensions of communication skill among participants.

Dimensions	Min	Max	Mean±SD
Verbal skill	9	29	20.8±3.4
Listening skill	6	26	17.6±4
Feedback skill	10	29	20.7±3.2
Total skill	39	80	59.2±7.3

Of all students, 72.4% were women and the rest were men. The average age of participants, was 36.9 ± 8.4 years. The mean score of total communication skills was calculated 59.2 ± 7.3 . The mean score of verbal skill, listening skill, and feedback skill were 20.8 ± 3.43 , 17.6 ± 4 , and 20.7 ± 3.2 , respectively. Total communication skills was significantly related with past work experience but other demographic variables hadn't significant relation with CS.

The difference score of total CS and all three dimensions (verbal, listening and feedback) wasn't significant between two sexes.

The difference score of total CS and all three dimensions (verbal, listening and feedback) wasn't significant between single and married persons.

The difference score of total CS and all three dimensions (verbal, listening and feedback) wasn't significant between four type of job employment condition (official, part-time, full-time and for a defined time).

The results showed that among the three aspects of communication skills, the verbal and feedback dimension with 20.8 ± 3.4 and 20.7 ± 3.2 had the highest average, respectively (Table 3).

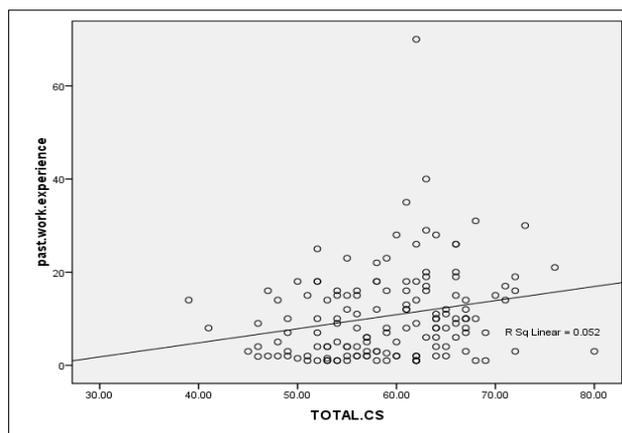


Figure 1: Correlation between total CS and past work experience.

Table 4: Correlation between dimension of CS with age and past work experience.

Variable	Past work experience	Age	Verbal skill	Listening skill	Feedback skill
Past work experience	1	r=0.78 P=0.001	r=0.19 P=0.025	r=0.21 P=0.013	r=0.18 P=0.031
Age	r=0.78 P=0.001	1	r=-0.004 P=0.96	r=0.26 P=0.002	r=0.007 P=0.38

DISCUSSION

In this study, the mean score of total communication skills was calculated 59.2 ± 7.3 . The mean score of verbal skill, listening skill, and feedback skill were 20.8 ± 3.43 , 17.6 ± 4 , and 20.7 ± 3.2 , respectively which was similar to Barati et al study in Hamadan.¹

Also, there was a significant relation between total CS with past work experience but other demographic variables hadn't significant relation with CS. In the study of Barati et al, in contract with our study, there was a significant relation between CS and variables such as age, gender, education and work experience.¹

Also, in many studies, the relation between CS and variables such as age, gender and education level was significant which not in line with our study results was.⁹⁻¹⁴

In this study, there was a positive correlation between verbal skill and feedback ($r=0.4$, $P=0.001$) but the relation between verbal skill and listening and also the relation between listening skill with feedback wasn't significant. In other studies in Iran, all of correlation between three dimension of CS was positive and significant which was some different to our study results.^{1,10,12,14}

In this study there was a significant difference in verbal skill score between women and men staff and nurses (18.9 ± 3.6 versus 17.2 ± 4.2 , $P=0.001$) but the difference in total CS score and other two dimension of CS (listening and feedback) score between two sexes wasn't significant

which was not in line with other studies, because in Barati et al study in Hamadan and also other studies in Iran, the total score of CS in women staff was significantly more than men staff.^{1,11,12,14}

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicated that the communication skills of Ardabil hospital nurses and staff were in moderate levels. So, strengthening communication skills by providing the necessary training programs for raising their CS in future is essential.

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Conflict of interest: None declared

Ethical approval: The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee

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