

## Students' Nursing Perception Regarding Communication Skills with Patients.

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### ABSTRACT

Communication is very important in profession of Nursing. Tendency to health or concerns, fear or indifference about disease may change among people and expectations and ideas of people are affected by their communications with their nurses. When nurses build efficient communication with their patients, they can contribute to positive development of patients. In short, communication-based success in health area depends on nurse' understanding of the ideas that the patient has and patients' understanding of what the nurse explains. **Purpose:** The aim of the study was to determine the perception of communication skills in second year nursing students. **Material and Methods:** This descriptive study was carried out with a sample of 45-second year nursing students & 96 patient. A questionnaire was administered to them. To evaluate the perception of communication skill "Communication Skills Assessing Scale" was used. **Results:** The average point was  $73.3 \pm 8.4$ . The perception level of female students and the students who participate in social activities more were high. Most of the students (63.5 %) think that communication is a skill that can be learned and 69.0 % of the students think that there may be some lessons about patient-nurse communication during their education period. **Conclusion & Recommendation:** The perception of communication skills of nursing students were at an intermediate level. Most of the students look on learning communication skills with favors. Addition of "communication lessons" to the curriculum is recommended to improve the communication skills of student.

**Key words:** communication, Student, perception, nursing

### INTRODUCTION

The most basic requirement of Human, a social being, is communication and it is the transfer of emotions, ideas and values among people with or without words **Nordby, H. (2009)** efficient communication is to ensure that the person who delivers the message enables the message to be perceived accurately. Efficient communication skill is a facilitator in all kinds of Human relationships and all kinds of occupational area. Especially in professions where Human contact is higher and where human relations are at the foreground, the employees must be more dominant in their

communication skills. In case of management, communication skills are more important. A good manager should be able to state its ideas clearly and deliver these messages in a way other people can clearly understand and should be a good listener. At the same time, s/he should be able to build good relationships with the people at different status working in and outside its department. Although some people may think that communication skills appear as congenital and via institution, many studies show that many elements of communication techniques are understandable and teachable **Craig, J., and Smyth, R. (2008), Stallings, K., and Rankin, S. (2008).**

Communication is very important in profession of nursing. Tendency to health or concerns, fear or indifference about disease may change among people and expectations and ideas of people are affected by their communications with their nurses. When nurses build efficient communication with their patients, they can contribute to positive development of patients. In short, communication-based success in health area depends on nurses' understanding of the ideas that the patient has and patients' understanding of what the nurse explains **Kinicki, A., and Williams, K (2010)**.

Throughout their work life, nurses always complain about not being understood or patient's very different perception of what they have explained **Smith, S. (2009)**. For example, a study carried out showed that half of the women under breast cancer treatment did not understand information explained to them about their illness. Munich Cancer Researcher Herr emphasized that disconnections in communications between nurse-patient created permanent effects on life quality of the patient and said that "better communication is the cheapest and easiest method of making more efficient breast cancer treatment" **Jones, M. (2008)**

In nurse-patient, relation, which is nurse, based and lead completely by the nurse, patients generally cannot ask their concerns or tell their facts in presence of the nurse and this confusion may lead patients to a different communication search (6). One of the most important scales used in health services regarding quality is patient satisfaction. Ensuring that the applicant feels that s/he had been rendered good service, cannot only be achieved with nurse's perfection in information and professional skills.

Success of the nurses in communication skills that affect their professional performance is directly reflected on patient satisfaction. For this reason, nurse being well equipped in communication skills directly affects their professional performance **Grover, S.(2010)**

In recent years, studies have been carried out more frequently to reveal the importance of communication skills of especially the personnel working in health service area. It was depicted that this caused many problems in nurse-patient communication and for this communication, skill training before and after graduation became more important **Moore, C.D. (2010) and White, L. (2009)**

#### **Significance of the study:**

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Historically, educating healthcare professionals was carried out in isolation by specific disciplines. This silo format for education limited the interaction between healthcare providers in their student roles. Consequently, healthcare students had little understanding of their colleagues' roles and may lack appreciation for the uniqueness and importance of each provider's contribution to patient care. Furthermore, the educational emphasis has been on knowledge acquisition and expert skill development with little attention being given to the development of expertise in coordination, collaboration, and communication **(Carol, et al., 2007)**.

#### **Aim of the study:**

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The aim of the study was to determine the perception of communication skills in second year nursing students.

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### Research question:

What are factors affect perception of communication skills in second year nursing students with their patients.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

**Research design:** Descriptive exploratory design was used in carrying out the study.

### Setting:

This study was conducted at Assiut university hospital as clinical areas for training second year faculty nursing students.(Orthopedic, Urology, Neurology, and Burn units ).

### Sample:

A convenience sample from the nursing students of the academic year 2012/2013 one group (45 students) and 96 patients who communicated with the second year faculty nursing students at Assiut University hospital (area of training) from (orthopedic, urology, neurology and burn units) were recruited for this study .

### Criteria of student:

- 1- Female student
- 2- Second years

### Tools :

1. **Patient's opinionair sheet:** It was developed to identify patients' opinion about second year faculty nursing student's communication. Researcher developed it after extensive review of relevant literature, it was designed to cover the socio demographic data

such as age, sex education, marital status and patient's opinion about second year nursing student's communication. The total score of patient's opinionair sheet was. (1) for positive points A score of (0) for negative points.

### 2. Student's interview questionnaire sheet:

was directed to nursing student to identify their knowledge about communication. It was designed to cover the following items:

- a- Socio-demographic data of second year nursing student's age, and residence.

Knowledge of second year nursing students regarding the communication., each item was observed, categorized, and scored into either correct = 1 or incorrect = 0 on all items. It included definition, components, function, modes, important of communication skills, behavioral ways, factors affecting of communication, successful conversation with the patients and characteristics of good communication.

### Scoring system:

The total number of questions was (37). The total scores were (100). Those who obtained less than 60% were considered having unsatisfactory level. While those who obtained more than 60% were considered having satisfactory level.

3-**Observational checklist about the communication skills** by listing the following orientation, preparing environment, care and respect of the patients, verbal and nonverbal communication and listening to patients.

**Methods:**

1. An official permission to carry out the study was obtained by submission of official letters issued from the Dean of the faculty of nursing Assiut University to the director of hospital and head of the units chosen for conduction of the study.
2. A pilot study was carried out on 10 patients and 10 students, which were excluded from the study subject to assess validity and reliability of the questions. Then some significant modifications were done to avoid the ambiguous parts of the questionnaire.
3. A jury of ten established content validity expertise's who reviewed the instruments for clarity, relevance, comprehensives, understanding and easiness for administration was established, minor modifications were required.
4. Data collection of this study was done during the period from October and November 2012. The researcher first explained the aim of the study to all the students and patients. The questionnaire was filled by the nursing students in their class at the faculty of nursing

and the average time needed for the completion of each form was about 20-30 minutes on Saturday. The researcher was checking the observation student practicing during the period of training taking 20 minutes for each student at the beginning of periods of training. Also collected the patients opinionair through interviews of the patients during the training and asked the questions to each patients and filled the answers according to the patients' opinion was 15 minutes for each patients

**Protection of human rights:**

The researcher approached student and patient's individuality and explain the purpose of the study. Patients and students were included in the study after verbal consent; confidentiality of patients were secured.

**Statistical design:**

Data collected and analyzed by using computer program SPSS "ver.12" descriptive data as mean  $\pm$  S.D. and number and percentage, chi-square test was used to determine significance between non parametric data, and T-Test to determine significance for numeric data. It was considered significant when  $p < 0.05$ .

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**Results**

**Table(1) Socio-demographic characteristics of patient in the study sample(n=96)**

	No	%
Age (years):		
<30	21	21.9
30-	19	19.8
40+	56	58.3
Range	18.0-68.0	
Mean ±SD	41.0±12.2	
Gender:		
Male	47	49.0
Female	49	51.0
Residence:		
Rural	67	69.8
Urban	29	30.2
Marital status:		
Married	52	54.2
Unmarried	44	45.8
Education:		
Uneducated	65	67.7
Educated	31	32.3
Job:		
Employee	11	11.5
Manual worker	20	20.8
Housewife	65	67.7
Department:		
Orthopedic	25	26.0
Burn	21	21.9
Neurology	25	26.0
Urology	25	26.0

**Table (1):** Shows characteristics of the patients. It was observed from that the mean age was  $41.0 \pm 12.2$ , females recorded higher frequency than males. 54% of the studied subjects were married. 67.7% of the studied subjects were uneducated regarding to their residence, 69.8% of them from rural areas.

**Table (2):** Socio-demographic characteristics of second year nursing students in the study sample (n=45)

	No	%
Age (years):		
18	37	82.2
19	8	17.8
Residence:		
Urban	18	40.0
Rural	27	60.0

**Table (2):** Shows that slightly more than two thirds of the nurses' student under study 82.2% their age 18 year old, while more than half 60% of them reside rural areas.

**Table (3):** Number Percentage distribution of second year students as regards their information about basics of communication

<b>Satisfactory knowledge about communication (60%+)</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Definition of communication	41	91.1
Components of communication	35	77.8
Functions of communication	4	8.9
Modes of communication	32	71.1
Importance of communication skills	42	93.3
Behavioral ways to improve communication	28	62.2
Factors affecting communication	32	71.1
Successful conversation with the patient.	37	82.2
Characteristic of good communication	40	88.9
Total knowledge:		
Satisfactory	32	71.1
Unsatisfactory	13	28.9

**Table (3):** Reveals that the highest percent as regard student information about basics of communication were meaning (91%) and importance of communication (93.3%). It also clarifies that most of students 82.2% were successful conversation with the patients. 77.8% of students were considered that the component of communication. For function of communication, students chose 8.9%. Highest percent of students 88.9% reported talking in humorous manner too much as characteristics of good communicator with the patients. The most of the students 71% had a satisfactory knowledge about communication during care.

**Table (4):** Percentage distribution of nursing students as regards their communication skills when communicating with the patients (receiving the patient, relation factors)N=45

<b>Adequate practice of communication (75%+)</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
Receiving the patient	32	71.1
Preparing environment around the patient	13	28.9
Deal and respect of the patient	42	39.3
Talking to patients (Verbal and nonverbal communication)	36	80.0
Overall communication skills	37	82.2
listening to the patient	31	68.9
Total practice communication		
Adequate	34	75.6
Inadequate	11	24.4

**Table (4):** Illustrates the distribution of the student regarding their practice of communication the majority of students 93.3% deal and respect of the patients, 80% of them taken to patients also 82.2% overall communication skills, through receiving the patients 75.6% of total practice of communication was adequate.

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**Table (5)** Relation between nursing students' knowledge about communication in relation to their age and residence

	Knowledge				X2 Test	P= Value
	Satisfactory		unsatisfactory			
	No.	%	No.	%		
Age (years):					Fisher	1.00
19	26	70.3	11	29.7		
20-21	6	18.811	2	15.4		
Residence:					0.02	0.89
Urban	13	72.2	5	27.8		
Rural	19	70.4	8	29.6		

**Table (5):** Shows that, relation between nursing students' knowledge about communication in relation to their age and residence, regarding to studied sample with age had 18 years old, it observed 70% of them had satisfactory degree of knowledge and 72% in relation to urban area.

**Table (6)** Relation between nursing students' practice related to communication in relation to age and residence

	Practice				Test	p-value
	Adequate		Inadequate			
	No.	%	No.	%		
Age (years):					Fisher	0.38
19	29	78.4	8	21.6		
20-21	5	62.5	3	37.5		
Residence:					Fisher	0.09
Urban	11	61.1	7	38.9		
Rural	23	85.2	4	14.8		

**Table (6):** Shows that relation between nursing student's practice of communication in relation to their age and residence, it observed the studied sample had satisfactory degree 78% in relation to 18 years old and 85% in relation to rural area.

**Table (7):** Relation between patients' opinionair about communication towards nursing students and their socio-demographic characteristics

	Opinionair				X <sup>2</sup> Test	p- value
	Positive		Negative			
	No.	%	No.	%		
Age (years):						
<30	9	42.9	12	57.1	2.89	0.24
30-	7	36.8	12	63.2		
40+	32	57.1	24	42.9		
Gender:						
Male	19	40.4	28	59.6	3.38	0.07
Female	29	59.2	20	40.8		
Residence:						
Rural	35	52.2	32	47.8	0.44	0.50
Urban	13	44.8	16	55.2		
Marital status:						
Married	32	61.5	20	38.5	6.04	0.01*
Unmarried	16	36.4	28	63.6		
Education:						
Uneducated	36	55.4	29	44.6	2.33	0.13
Educated	12	38.7	19	61.3		
Job:						
Employee	4	36.4	7	63.6	1.40	0.50
Manual worker	9	45.0	11	55.0		
Unemployed/housewife	35	53.8	30	46.2		
Department:						
Orthopedic	20	80.0	5	20.0	13.90	0.003*
Burn	6	28.6	15	71.4		
Neurology	12	48.0	13	52.0		
Urology	10	40.0	15	60.0		

**Table (7):** Clarifies that the relation between patients opinionair about communication towards second year nursing students in relation to their socio demographic characteristics, it observed that the statistically was significant regarding to marital status and types of departments.

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**Table (8):** Relation between patients' acceptance of nursing students and their socio-demographic characteristics

	Acceptance of patients				X <sup>2</sup> Test	p-value
	Accepting		Rejecting			
	No.	%	No.	%		
Age (years):						
<30	9	42.9	12	57.1	5.27	0.07
30-	8	42.1	11	57.9		
40+	37	66.1	19	33.9		
Gender:						
Male	18	38.3	29	61.7	12.06	0.001*
Female	36	73.5	13	26.5		
Residence:						
Rural	29	58.2	28	41.8	0.35	0.56
Urban	15	51.7	14	48.3		
Marital status:						
Married	36	69.2	16	30.8	7.77	0.005*
Unmarried	18	40.9	26	59.1		
Education:						
Uneducated	41	63.1	24	36.9	3.81	0.051
Educated	13	41.9	18	58.1		
Job:						
Employee	5	45.5	610	54.5	1.21	0.55
Manual worker	10	50.0	10	50.0		
Unemployed/housewife	39	60.0	26	40.0		
Department:						
Orthopedics	18	72.0	7	28.0	5.33	0.15
Burns	8	38.1	13	61.9		
Neurology	14	56.0	11	44.0		
urology	14	56.0	11	44.0		

**Table (8):** Clarifies that the relation between patients acceptance of second nursing students and their sociodemographic data, it was observed that a significant statistically as regarding to their gender and marital status. The majority of the studied subject had 40 and more females, married, uneducated, unemployed and orthopedic department were acceptance of the second year student

**Discussion**

Communication is a key tool that health care professionals must use to elicit cooperation among individuals in the delivery of health care services. Communication also enables the nurse to establish the type of relationship with a patient, that influences the outcomes of care. **Carol and Marylou, (2007) and Shattell, (2009)**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the factors affecting communication between patients and second year nursing students. Findings of the present study revealed that 58% of patients of the studied subjects were from 40 and more years old. To some extent, this is corresponding to that of **Zakaria (2008)**, who mentioned that, 75% cases communicating in surgical units with nurses. N relation to gender, results showed

that female patient's represent 51.8%, this is not corresponding with **McGilton and Boscart (2006)**, who reported that, communication is slightly higher in men than women.

Regarding to marital status, the study findings showed that more than half of patients were married. In relation to the education of the patients, the results of the present study revealed that approximately two-third of them were uneducated, this study disagrees with **White (2005)**, who stated that education has a strong influence on communication.

As regard the socio-demographic data of second year nursing students, the present study revealed that approximately two-thirds of the students age was eighteen years, it might be due to that students were in their second year, and this is the suitable age for this year.

As regards residence, results indicated that more half of the students were from rural areas. Regarding the knowledge of the second year nursing students about communication as definition, components, modes and importance, it was cleared that the majority of them approached to the correct answer. This consistent with **Hegner and Caldwell (2007)** **White (2009)**, **Perry (2006)**.

On the other hand, this study revealed that the majority of the nursing students considered that the behavioral students improve communication is giving enough time to the patient to understand the conversation. This study finding agrees with **Boscart (2006)**, who explained that the nurse must allow the patient to share relevant information and also gives the patient an opportunity to consider what is

being said, weight alternatives and formulate an answer.

Additionally, the most of the studied student mentioned that values and socio-cultural habits are factors affecting communication. This study findings agrees with **Ahmed (2011)**, who stated that the patients differ in their perception of communication quality due to Various factors as socio-cultural. Background, socio-economic status, needs, age, values and experience.

As regards that the characteristics of good communication with patients in the present study reported that the most of the studied students considered that the characteristics of good communication with patient is good listener, because listening is a skill that involves both hearing and interpreting what the other says during conversation. This study agrees with **Suikkala (2008)**, who explained that listening requires attention and concentration to sort out, evaluate, and validate clues in order to better understand the true meaning of what is being said.

The study findings clarified that the majority of the students had satisfactory knowledge about communication with patient during care and that minority of them had unsatisfactory knowledge about basic of communication process. Many related factors affect communication between nursing students and patients while receiving and dealing with the patients.

As regards receiving the patients, the results indicated that more than the students practice orientation to the patient and know the patient name and don't introduce themselves to the patient which can create uncertainty about the interaction

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and convey an impersonal lack of caring this study confirms with **White (2009)**, who pointed out that failure to identify one self can create uncertainty because the person often encounters many personnel when seeking health care.

On the other hand, the present study showed that while dealing with the patient, the results indicated that most of the students respect the patient as a patient, it gives to patient impression that she is honest and kind when she deals with him/her. This study confirms with **Anderson and Helm (2006)** and **Summers (2010)**, who found that, it is important that patients have some self-esteem and feel that care providers are concerned about them.

The present study showed that there are psychological factors that affect communication between the nursing student and patient indifferent units especially in neurological and burn unit. Many disturbing feeling and reactions are aroused. These include anxiety, anger, hostility, grief and hopelessness. The nursing student must be aware of these different reactions. As well **Abd El- salam (2006)** and **Nordby (2009)** pointed out that , most people don't expect to get sick or have life altering accidents.

The present study also showed that there are situational factors that effect communication between nursing students and patient, while talking and listening to the patient, and offering nursing care needed for the patient. The majority of the students talking to patients by verbal and non verbal communication, this means that they continue the conversation and interaction with the patient. This study agrees with **Zakaria (2008)** and **potter and Perry (2006)** explained that effective

communication requires facial expression that agrees with own message.

This study also revealed that the majority of the students speak with the patient more that listen to him, which means that the patients becomes feeling boring, anxious and distracted with other thoughts due to no interaction while conversing. The study is not in accordance **Hegner and Coldwell (2007)**, who pointed out that the nurse is often able to help the patient talk about feelings and reduces anxiety by using therapeutic communication techniques. In addition, **Tawfik (2008)** and **Foster (2005)**, who explained that listening is the most important communication technique that involves both hearing and interpreting what the other says.

The present study showed that there are many environmental factors that affect communication between nursing students and patients. This study articulated that accommodation of the environment around the patient and found that most of the students don't reduce that noise that upsets the patient, it means that she isn't keen on him/her and this noise can distort the message sent between them. This study contradicts with **White (2009)**, who found that the area where the communication takes place is an important part of the communication process, whereas, **Smith (2009)**, pointed out that, environmental characteristics clarified that an individual's surrounding may have a profound effect. On his /her behavioral.

Whereas, this study revealed that the all of the students don't sit in a comfortable position suitable for them, and this in a comfortable position suitable for them, and this could be attributed to the unavailability of seats for sitting, so that

students are obliged to be in a standing position till the end of the practice day, the students who will be unable to complete conversation with the patient due to that her posture provides non-verbal clues concerning physical discomfort. This study disagrees with **Taylor et al. (2010)**, who found that the way a person holds the body carries nonverbal messages. People in good health and with a positive attitude; usually hold their bodies in good alignment. Depressed or tired people are more likely to slouch.

As regards relation between patients opinionair about communication towards second year nursing students in relation to their socio demographic characteristics it observed that the statistically was significant regarding to marital status and types of departments. This was also on line with **Zakaria, A. (2008)**, who stated that, patients from rural areas have lower socio-cultural difference and are mostly illiterate.

Finally the factors affecting communication between second year nursing students and patients. The result of the present study showed that, there are many factors affecting communication such as age of the nursing students and the patients. Sex of the patient, marital status and types of department. The environmental factors, such as getting the place with good ventilation and clean as possible, sit in a comfortable position suitable for patient and her.

#### **Answer to Research Question.**

The students' experience on a hospital unit varied. While it was possible to have a positive experience on a traditional unit, based on these results, it was a mixed bag and not likely predicable or consistent. Harsh, ineffectual, and

dismissive communication often by some harried staff nurses resulted in students feeling at best ignored and at worst frightened and intimidated. This inconsistency was described as very anxiety provoking for students. Students recognized that the busyness of the unit contributed to this situation. Students also felt that, because the instructor was so busy, they were often left on their own to deal with these challenges.

#### **Conclusion**

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The present study concluded that second year nursing students have satisfactory level of knowledge about communication and adequate level of communication skills. The patients have satisfactory level as regards the opinionair about communication with nursing students. The factors affecting communication between patients and second year nursing students were age of the patients and the students, sex of the patient, knowledge level, amount of training, skills while receiving the patient, dealing with the patient, talking to the patient, listening to the patient and environment around patient.

#### **Recommendations:**

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Based on the results present study, the following recommendations are suggested:

- 1- Implementing of teaching programs to the nursing students about communication.
- 2- Periodic ward conferences aiming to gain more knowledge that is advanced.

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- 3- Videotapes in the clinical area should be used in teaching therapeutic communication techniques.

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