

Research Paper



Analysis of how health professionals communicate with mental patients: a study of Pantang government hospital

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Article Info

Article History:

Received: 11 May 2023

Revised: 16 July 2023

Accepted: 24 July 2023

Published: 09 September 2023

Keywords:

Health Professionals

Communication

Mental Health Patients

Patient

Government Hospital



ABSTRACT

Background: Effective communication between health professionals and mental health patients is central to patient satisfaction and treatment outcomes, yet variability in communication quality among staff may compromise care.

Objective: To analyze how health professionals communicate with mental health patients and to examine the effects of this communication on patients and on Pantang Government Hospital.

Methods: Qualitative exploratory study using primary and secondary data sources. Twelve participants at Pantang Government Hospital were interviewed to obtain qualitative data on communication practices between healthcare staff and mental health patients.

Results: Most health professionals communicated politely with patients, and most nurses were found to speak in ways that pleased patients; however, a minority of mental health nurses and midwives displayed impolite communication and poor interpersonal skills. Communication quality was found to influence patient satisfaction and broader healthcare outcomes at the hospital.

Conclusion: Hospital human resource managers should provide targeted training to nurses and midwives to eliminate inappropriate communication and strengthen interpersonal skills. Improving staff-patient communication is likely to enhance patient satisfaction and health outcomes for individuals with mental illness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last six decades, there has been a significant shift in health professionals' attitudes toward communicating with patients and their families worldwide (Borkowski & Meese, 2020). Most health professionals have shifted from adopting only face-to-face communication to multiple ways of communicating. The researchers further argued that, previously, only a few health professionals communicated politely with patients. [1], [2] Discovered that most mental health professionals in most developed countries had understood the need to communicate politely with mental health patients; however, the practices have yet to find their footing in effective communication worldwide [3], [4] suggested that by 2030, mental health professionals would practice effective communication with patients worldwide, although it would face some challenges.

When it comes to health issues, communication is crucial because it is essential for better health outcomes between health professionals and patients. According to [5] study at Accra Psychiatric Hospital, communication breakdowns cause 15% of medical malpractices. According to the study, several strategies must be considered to ensure effective communication within the mental healthcare system to boost patient morale and perspectives. [6] Identified strategies for promoting effective and polite communication between health professionals and patients in Ghanaian hospitals. According to the study assessment and respect, patience, cultivating attentive listening behavior, and using the appropriate tone are all examples of such strategies, according to the study.

According to [6], healthcare providers must assess their body language to ensure that all clients and stakeholders are treated respectfully. Consideration of patients' requests and grievances is one of the communication studies conducted in Ghana, specifically in the Central Region, toward effective communication strategies [7]. According to the study, patients' requests and grievances should be accommodated as much as possible rather than commanding patients to accept hard-core instructions. The study concluded that illness, including mental health challenges, requires health professionals to be patient to accommodate those suffering from such illnesses.

Investigating how mental health professionals' communication and analyzing the impact on healthcare providers and patients at Pantang Hospital could improve the ability to provide the best possible care for patients while also making them feel like valued partners in their care. Acceptable and loving language in conversation remains important in all communications because it conveys warmth and empathy, allowing the patient to open – up and gain confidence in proper healthcare.

Several concerns have been raised about how health professionals should communicate with people with various illnesses [8], [9]. Thus, the overarching purpose of this research is to investigate how mental health professionals communicate with their respective patients. This investigation is being carried out because of the following factors: First, it is necessary to comprehend how mental health professionals communicate with their patients to find out the effect on patients and mental health care providers.

The series aims to establish the importance of communicating ethically with people who are mentally challenged; however, no concrete solution has been found [10]. In another development, [11] claimed that some mentally challenged individuals and families complained that Pantang Government Hospital health care professionals rarely speak to them politely, overlooking the fact that effective communication could even help reduce patient mental illness rates.

1.1 Objectives

The study sought to examine how health professionals communicate with mental patients, with a particular focus on Pantang Government Hospital health professionals. The study has been carried out to gain an understanding of how mental health professionals communicate with their patients, as well as the effects of communication between healthcare professionals and patients. The study adds to the body of knowledge about the impact of communication on the health of mentally challenged patients. The study also adds to the body of knowledge on how to improve patient satisfaction through communication. The investigation adds to the literature on communication skill improvement for health outcomes.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Approach and Design

The study used a qualitative research approach and exploratory research design to address the study objectives. The study used the probability sampling method, which involved a simple random sampling (SRS) to select participants for the study. Face-to-face interview was used as a data collection technique to address the study objectives. Data gathered were categorized using themes such as how health professionals communicate with patients, the motivations that influence how health professionals communicate, various modes of communication used by healthcare professionals, and justification for using those modes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 How Health Professionals Communicate with Patients

There were mixed reactions (positive and negative) regarding how health professionals communicate with patients. According to the study, health professionals listened attentively to patients, recognized everything patients said, made eye contact when appropriate, made patients feel at ease, and communicated with them politely without looking down on them because of their health challenges. Similarly, the analysis revealed that Health professionals engaged and exchanged information with patients ethically and responsibly to safeguard their anonymity and apply culturally sensitive measures in their contact with patients. The health professionals also admitted that caring for mentally challenged people is difficult, nevertheless, they try as much as possible to use courteous, welcoming, and simple language to communicate politely with patients. The findings imply that because the mental health specialists at Pantang Government Facility communicate respectfully with patients, there is the likelihood that patients would inform other sick people to consider visiting the hospital for healthcare services. The findings support the findings of [12] study that in the context of healthcare communication, attentive listening not only makes patients and healthcare practitioners feel more at ease, but it also increases the possibility that they will understand each other throughout a conversation. despite the admirable efforts of many health workers and hospital leadership to converse politely with patients, some nurses and midwives remained impolite according to the study. Some employees yell at patients, especially during childbirth. Some nurses in the mental ward ignore patients' communication requirements and concerns, misuse their communication, and mistreat patients. Empirical research demonstrates that even the least inconsiderate behaviour by health practitioners can undo all their prior good efforts. The finding is consistent with [13] study, which discovered that the hospital setting can be compared to a sword edge, with each side potentially hurting and that there is always varied behaviour among personnel regarding how they communicate.

3.2 Patients Satisfaction with how Health Professionals Communication.

The survey gathered several perspectives on how satisfied or dissatisfied people were with the way health professionals spoke with them. Most patients agreed with their health professionals' communication strategies. However, a minority of people were dissatisfied with how health professionals interacted with them. According to the findings of the study, some midwives and psychiatric nurses lack communication skills and interpersonal connections. The findings are in line with the findings of the [14] study, which highlights concerns about communication approaches among certain midwives and mental health nurses, emphasising the importance of improving communication skills and interpersonal interactions within these healthcare professions.

3.3 Motivators for Communicating with Patients

The study discovered that several factors influenced how health professionals communicate with their patients. Most of these factors relates to:

1. Developing stronger, more effective relationships with patients to increase adherence to advise and medication prescriptions and, ultimately, improve health outcomes.
2. Reducing barriers to mutual understanding by making routine responsibilities easier.
3. Addressing patients' problems and preferences, assisting patients, demonstrating understanding and compassion, and upholding the hospital's image.
4. Analyzing the patient's point of view to avoid confrontations that could lead to conflict, improve patient care and health, streamline operations, and
5. Promoting trust and healing while avoiding exacerbating patients' already precarious and failing health situations.
6. Improving the health-care system and the vision of healthcare facilities.

3.4 Communication Modes

The survey revealed that health professionals communicate with patients through verbal communication, either in person or over the phone. The study also discovered that health workers connect with patients by listening, interacting, and using body language and facial expressions. The data support [15] conclusion that voice, body language, facial emotions, and other bodily gestures and movements continue to be the primary forms of communication in the health sector.

3.5 Reason for the use of Various Communication Modes

According to the study, healthcare professionals employed verbal communication to engage with patients to understand concerns and conditions of patients for possible attention. Verbal communication aided both patients and health providers in achieving satisfaction. Additionally, the interactive communication style helps patient and healthcare givers communication and receive feedback in physical and psychological circumstances. The findings support [16], which states that health care practitioners employ different communication methods in different situations because certain approaches are more effective in terms of cost, time, and impact on healthcare delivery.

3.6 The Effect of Health Professional Communication

3.6.1 Effect on Patients

According to the findings, health professionals' communications positively influence patients' health outcomes, protect patients from potential harm caused by misunderstandings, influence the quality of care they receive, and improve their health and adherence to treatment. Polite speech fosters a friendly environment, boosts patients' morale, hastens the healing process, fosters trust, and reduces the danger of prescription errors. The study admitted that speaking with patients not only reassures them and their families but also has a good impact on patient care and health, as well as consistently improving day-to-day interactions between patients and health professionals. The findings are consistent with [17] study, which found that strong communication practice in the healthcare sector strengthens relationships between health practitioners, patients, and patients' family members.

3.6.2 Effect on Pantang Government Hospital

How health professionals communicate benefits hospitals in meeting their communication needs and assists the managerial function by ensuring appropriate patient handling. Another finding was that excellent communication helps health institutions retain their reputation, raise awareness, and instill a sense of connectedness in all staff and patients. Proper communication with patients and clients leads to a high patient turnover, which helps hospitals make more income. The findings are related to the [18] study, which found that pleasant communication assists healthcare staff in developing relationships with their patients, soliciting essential health information, and collaborating effectively with all members of a care team and the public.

3.6.3 The Effect of Communication on Healthcare

The findings revealed that polite communication helps patients form favourable impressions of Pantang Hospital's services. As a result, patients and health professionals' benefits from higher patient satisfaction, increased adherence to therapy, and a lower probability of malpractice lawsuits. Furthermore, a pleasant patient-provider relationship encourages cooperation. It provides more opportunities to learn about a patient's health requirements so that patients can be better connected with therapies and services to improve their overall health. The findings may be related to [19] outcome, which indicates that how health professionals communicate with patients helps them, patients, and the hospital achieve the desired objectives.

3.7 Implications of the Study

The implications of this study are significant for both healthcare providers and patients. On one hand, the research highlights the positive impact of respectful and courteous communication between health professionals, particularly mental health specialists, and patients. When health professionals listen attentively, recognize patients' concerns, make eye contact, and communicate respectfully, it fosters a sense of trust and comfort among patients. This positive experience not only enhances the patient-provider relationship but also increases the likelihood of patients recommending the hospital's services to others. It underscores the importance of empathetic and culturally sensitive communication in healthcare settings. On the other hand, the study also sheds light on the alarming issue of impolite and disrespectful behavior exhibited by some healthcare workers, particularly nurses and midwives. Instances of yelling, ignoring patients' needs, and mistreatment can have severe consequences. Even a single instance of inconsiderate behavior can negate all the positive efforts made by healthcare practitioners. This highlights the urgent need for addressing the negative attitudes and behaviors among some healthcare professionals.

Effective and polite communication positively influences patient satisfaction, trust, and overall impressions of the hospital's services. Patients are more likely to adhere to treatment plans, follow medical advice, and cooperate with healthcare professionals when communication is respectful and empathetic. Good communication directly impacts patient health outcomes. Patients who experience positive communication are more likely to experience better health, faster healing, and improved adherence to prescribed treatments and medications. Polite communication helps protect patients from potential harm caused by misunderstandings and reduces the risk of prescription errors. It also lowers the probability of malpractice lawsuits, safeguarding the hospital's reputation and legal standing.

Positive patient-provider relationships lead to higher patient satisfaction, which, in turn, contributes to a favorable reputation for Pantang Hospital. Satisfied patients are more likely to recommend the hospital's services, leading to increased patient turnover and revenue generation. Effective communication streamlines hospital operations by enhancing mutual understanding, reducing barriers, and addressing patients' problems and preferences. It ensures that routine responsibilities are carried out smoothly, improving the overall efficiency of healthcare services. Encouraging polite communication fosters a positive working environment for healthcare professionals. Training programs can be designed to enhance communication skills, ensuring that all staff members, including midwives and psychiatric nurses, possess the necessary interpersonal skills to interact effectively with patients. Proper communication allows healthcare providers to understand patients' health requirements better. This understanding enables tailored education and engagement strategies, ensuring that patients are well-informed and connected with appropriate therapies and services to improve their overall health.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the crucial role of respectful communication in healthcare. It underscores the positive outcomes associated with empathetic and culturally sensitive interactions while also underscoring the detrimental effects of even minor disrespectful behavior. Healthcare providers and institutions must prioritize training and awareness programs to ensure that all staff members

consistently engage in polite and respectful communication with patients, thereby enhancing patient experiences and overall satisfaction with healthcare services. The study also highlights that polite and effective communication is a cornerstone of successful healthcare delivery. By focusing on respectful communication strategies, Pantang Hospital can enhance patient satisfaction, improve health outcomes, mitigate risks, boost its reputation, and ultimately contribute to the overall well-being of its patients. Additionally, investing in staff training and fostering a culture of empathy and understanding can further strengthen the hospital's patient-provider relationships.

Acknowledgments

The authors have no specific acknowledgments to make for this research.

Funding Information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	O	E	Vi	Su	P	Fu
Amartey Cynthia Lani	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sylvester Akyea-Mensah	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Peter Peprah Manu	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

C : Conceptualization

M : Methodology

So : Software

Va : Validation

Fo : Formal analysis

I : Investigation

R : Resources

D : Data Curation

O : Writing - Original Draft

E : Writing - Review & Editing

Vi : Visualization

Su : Supervision

P : Project administration

Fu : Funding acquisition

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

Informed Consent

All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their voluntary consent was obtained prior to data collection.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

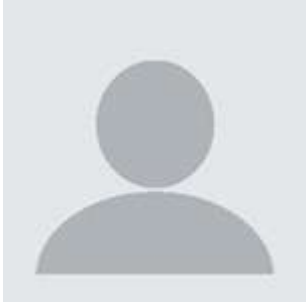
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How to Cite: Amartey Cynthia Lani, Sylvester Akyea-Mensah, Peter Peprah Manu. (2023). Analysis of how health professionals communicate with mental patients: a study of pantang government hospital. Journal of Mental Health Issues and Behavior (JMhib), 3(2), 28-35. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jmhib.35.5.12>

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	Sylvester Akyea-Mensah, is an academic from Ghana. He is linked to the College of Distance Education at the University of Education, Winneba. He has worked on research tied to mental health and health communication. One example is a qualitative study on how health staff talk with people receiving mental health care at Pantang Government Hospital. His focus looks at how professionals communicate day to day. He also studies interpersonal skills, what patients feel and experience, and what can get in the way of good health service. Overall, his research adds to efforts aimed at better communication in care settings. It also supports more patient-focused mental health services in Ghana.
	Peter Peprah Manu, is from Ghana. He works as an academic and a professional linked to the College of Distance Education at the University of Education, Winneba. His research looks at mental health. He also studies healthcare administration and human resources. Education is another key area for him. He pays attention to organizational issues as well. He has helped on work about how health workers talk with mental health patients. He has also written about settings that feel more psychologically safe. In addition, he has done research tied to university radio broadcasting. Overall, his publications draw from more than one field. They connect healthcare management with teaching, communication, and how organizations perform.