

Bridging the Gap: The Power of Effective Communication in Enhancing Medication Adherence and Patient Satisfaction

Tricia Watts

Nightingale College



Background and Clinical Question

Background: Patient non-adherence to medication regimens can have significant impact on patient health outcomes and lead to increased hospital admissions and healthcare costs. Poor provider-patient communication can be a critical factor in patient non-adherence and decreased satisfaction.

Clinical Question: How can improved communication strategies between healthcare providers and patients enhance medication adherence and satisfaction?

Purpose Statement

The primary objective for this project is to enhance communication strategies between providers and patients to achieve improved patient satisfaction and adherence to prescribed medication regimens.

SMART GOAL:

The intended outcome is to achieve a 10% increase in both patient satisfaction scores and medication adherence rates over a 12-month period.

Current Evidence

- Numerous studies suggest that employing clear, patient-centered communication techniques including utilizing the teach-back method, motivational interviewing, etc., can significantly improve patient understanding and adherence to medication regimens.
- Effective communication has been associated with enhanced patient satisfaction scores.

(Çakmak & Uğurluoğlu, 2024).

Methodology

Population/eligibility:

- Diverse patient populations within a primary care practice.
- Rural and underserved populations. (Rural Health Information Hub, 2024).

Practice setting: Primary care clinics

Protection/Ethical treatment: Ensuring informed consent and confidentiality including anonymized data that is securely stored.

Cost Analysis

- Implementing communication training programs for healthcare providers/facilities does incur costs related to training materials and time. However, the costs of these programs are outweighed by the reduction in hospital readmissions and enhanced patient health outcomes associated with improved medication adherence.

Design

Interventions:

- Training healthcare providers in improved effective communication techniques.

Teach-Back Method: Confirms patient understanding of their medication regimen and care instructions.

- Cover the principles of the teach-back method, practical examples, and scenarios.
- Conduct simulations where providers practice using the teach-back method with peers acting as patients.

Motivational Interviewing (MI): Address ambivalence and enhance patient motivation towards medication adherence.

- Introduce the core principles of MI, such as expressing empathy, developing discrepancy, rolling with resistance, and supporting self-efficacy.
- Conduct interactive sessions that provide opportunities for providers to refine their MI skills through practice exercises and feedback.

Digital Communication Tools: Familiarizing providers with digital communication technologies can facilitate better patient-provider interaction and adherence tracking.

- Overview of tools such as patient portals, telemedicine applications, and digital reminders for medication.
- Demonstrations and practice sessions on using these technologies effectively.

- Implementing routine follow-up communications via phone or secure messaging to reinforce adherence.

Project Implementation:

Stakeholders: Healthcare providers, clinic managers, patients.

Barriers: Cost, resistance to change, time constraints in training sessions.

Evaluation: Use patient surveys and adherence tracking through electronic health records (EHR).

Data Collection:

Tools: Surveys for patient satisfaction & EHRs/ Medication Adherence Report Scale (MARS-5) for tracking pharmacy records/medication adherence rates.

Anticipated Results

Based on Prior Studies: Increased adherence rates and improved patient satisfaction scores are anticipated, aligning with outcomes from similar communication-based studies.

Future Recommendations

Change Management: Routine trainings and feedback collection to sustain communication improvements.

Project Expansion: Including telehealth services to expand reach into rural/underserved communities and to reinforce communication strategies.

Clinical Implications/Impact to Nursing Practice

Effective communication enhances nurse-patient relationships, leading to improved adherence and patient outcomes. This intervention not only promotes holistic patient-centered care but enhances the role of nurses as pivotal communicators in healthcare.

Conclusion

Investing in effective communication processes is essential for achieving superior patient outcomes and elevating the standard of care in healthcare practice.

References

Çakmak, C., & Uğurluoğlu, Ö. (2024). The effects of patient-centered communication on patient engagement, health-related quality of life, service quality perception and patient satisfaction in patients with cancer: A cross-sectional study in Türkiye. *Cancer Control*, 31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10732748241236327>

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