

## Factors That Influence Nursing Quality

**Esther Sudhir Joseph**

Nursing Superintendent, Govt. Medical College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra 440003, India.

### Abstract

In countries throughout the world, patient experiences are being monitored in order to obtain information about the delivery and quality of healthcare. Patient experiences can be defined as a reflection of what actually happened during the care process and therefore provide information about the performance of healthcare workers. It refers to the process of care provision. In many countries assessing patient experiences is part of a systematic survey programme. There are certain factors which affects the quality of nursing care [1].

**Keywords:** Quality of Health Care; Communication; Work Environment; Advancement Opportunities; Productivity.

### Significance of Communication

Regardless of the level of nursing education, all nurses take courses in medical ethics, patient care and basic communication skills. These classes prepare nurses to properly interact with hospital staff, patients and other hospital guests.

Nurses have a lot of patient interaction, and even when in difficult or stressful situations nurses need to remain calm and professional. If nurses aren't properly trained to handle stressful situations or communicate effectively with patients and co-workers, their ability to provide outstanding patient care is at risk.

### Work Environment

A poor work environment definitely affects the quality of nursing care. Factors such as poor

teamwork, excessive required work hours, stress, lack of work flexibility and quality of supervisors all affect nursing quality. Nurses provide better care to patients if they look forward to coming to work each day. Hospitals can make life easier for busy nurses by providing add-ons such as childcare, a fitness center and other perks. This way, nurses can focus on providing better patient care, not worrying about finding a babysitter on short notice.

### Advancement Opportunities

Opportunities for advancement are essential in the field of nursing. Positions in nurse supervising and nurse management should be made available to nurses with a strong work ethic, a history of excellent patient care, demonstrated leadership skills and proven teamwork skills. An opportunity to gain more experience and expand work duties is both stimulating and rewarding to nurses who have proven their dedication to nursing and caring for patients. Nurses who are not given the opportunity to advance may begin to dread coming to work and performing the same duties repeatedly. This attitude can result in poor patient care.

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**Reprint Request:** Esther Sudhir Joseph, Nursing Superintendent, Govt. Medical College and Hospital, Nagpur, Maharashtra 440003, India.

E-mail: [sudhirjoseph@ymail.com](mailto:sudhirjoseph@ymail.com)

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### Productivity

Nurses should remain stimulated and given different tasks to perform throughout their shift. Performing the same tasks could lead to boredom.

In contrast, excessive productivity causes burnout. Burnout results from a poor work environment, stress and lack of personal time. Burnout is preventable. Nurses can avoid burnout by being compensated for continuing education, having more time to spend with family and loved ones, having a better work environment and having opportunities to discuss and conquer work stresses [2].

For example, a study by the Picker Institute Europe revealed eight general quality aspects [4,5,6]:

- Involvement in decisions and respect for preferences
- Clear, comprehensible information and support for self-care
- Emotional support, empathy and respect
- Fast access to reliable health advice
- Effective treatment

- Attention to physical and environmental needs
- Involvement of, and support for, family and careers
- Continuity of care and smooth transitions

From the perspective of nurses, the following eight 'essentials' are crucial in a work environment to the provision of high quality nursing care [7,8,9].

- Clinically competent nurses
- Adequate staffing
- Good nurse-physician relationships
- Autonomous nursing practice
- Nurse manager support
- Control over nursing practice
- Support for education
- A culture that values concern for patients

It is focused on improving patient care, patient safety and patient experiences by creating a good and healthy work environment for nurses. Research has shown that patient experiences in healthy work environments are significantly better.

Facilitating elements	Inhibiting factors
Clinically competent nurses Collaborative working relationships Autonomous nursing practice Adequate staffing Control over nursing practice Managerial support Patient-centred care	Cost-effectiveness policy Transparency and accountability goals

### Clinically Competent Nurses

#### *Social Skills*

Social skills are an important competency to create a trustful care relationship. They indicated correct behaviour and attitude, composure, making time for patients, and listening and having empathy as essential nursing competencies. Social skills convey a sense of commitment to the patient and play a major role in meeting patient expectations.

#### *Expertise & Experience*

Three key aspects related to expertise, namely knowledge, technical skills and communicative capabilities. The first key aspect means that nurses must have substantive knowledge related to the nursing profession. They indicated that nurses should maintain and follow both existing developments and new insights. They must continually invest in nursing knowledge and education. They ought to offer state-of-the-art

interventions or activities that are in line with the agreed nursing policy.

As a second key aspect related to expertise, participants indicated that nurses must have technical skills in order to provide effective and safe care. The third aspect mentioned by participants is that nurses must have communicative capabilities. Nurses serve as spokespersons for patients who are often in vulnerable positions. They are easily accessible and can act as a link between the patient and other professions. Nurses can use the right substantive arguments on behalf of a patient's interests or needs.

#### *Priority Setting*

Various activities can occur simultaneously during the daily care of patients. According to them, nurses should assess what care is needed and then flexibly coordinate diverse actions with each other. Prioritisation is about the organisation of nursing

care. Patients need nurses who have clinical experience in order to coordinate care. Nurses must decide what choices to make, what is urgent and what is important. Those choices influence patient experiences.

#### *Collaborative Working Relationships*

It is important to develop and maintain collaborative working relationships with professionals, including those in their own field. In the view of participants, collaborative working relationships exist when all the involved professionals interact and operate in a complementary manner, and show mutual respect that is based on knowledge and expertise. All professionals need to discuss and influence patient care on the basis of their own expertise. Problems will be solved sooner when ideas and thoughts are exchanged. It is about sharing information and communication. Communication and aligning with each other is needed so that no conflicting information is given and uniformity in care or treatment is provided. This generates, composure and clarity towards patients.

#### *Autonomous Nursing Practice*

The scope of practice for which they are accountable influences patient experiences. The scope of practice, according to them, means that nurses can control their own work related to patient care and can make independent decisions about patient outcomes based on clinical judgements. They believe it is essential to monitor and measure outcomes, as long as the monitoring is directly related to patient care. They did not have insight into care results obtained from assessments

#### *Adequate Staffing*

The number of nurses available influences how patients experience the quality of care. Although they could not indicate what number they consider sufficient, they think that a sufficient nurse staffing level is linked to team composition or staff mix. For instance, participants indicated the proportion of registered nurses to student nurses, or the number of different nurse qualification levels in one team. Several tasks and assignments have been transferred to nurses with a lower qualification in order to work as efficiently as possible and to achieve higher productivity. As a result, nursing care is, in general, increasingly developing in the direction of task-centred care in which different working methods are applied. According to them, this affects patient

experiences of the quality and effectiveness of nursing care.

#### *Control Over Nursing Practice*

The control over nursing practice means that nurses are involved in nursing policy or nursing issues. In their view, nurses are not always in charge and cannot always make their own decisions about nursing issues.

#### *Managerial Support*

A manager should pay attention to the team spirit and unity. Manager must be able to handle conflicts, and also be visible and approachable. They believe that a manager should ask the opinion of nurses; therefore, in their opinion, regular contact is important.

A manager, must be able to create the right conditions and have the logistical ability to ensure continuity of care. In their view, this means arranging sufficient personnel, replacement staff and succession planning.

#### *Patient-Centred Care*

The focus of nurses is the provision of patient-centred care. They define this as nursing care that is focussed on patient needs and preferences and is intended to increase patient self-management and encourage improved health and recovery.

Nurses are the first points of contact for patients. They are often with the patient for 24 hours/7 days a week (except for home care) and gather large amounts of information about them. They think that direct contact with patients is crucial to building and maintaining a relationship of trust. The high quality nursing care is achieved when patients feel heard and understood, consider themselves to be in safe hands and know that their care problems have been noticed.

#### *Inhibiting Factors*

Two inhibiting factors that prevent them from improving patient experiences: cost-effectiveness and transparency & accountability goals.

#### *Cost-Effectiveness*

Organisation policy is focused on the efficient and effective deployment of people and resources. They mentioned the transfer of tasks to less well qualified nurses in order to work as efficiently as possible and

to achieve higher productivity. In their view, care is more and more standardised. At the same time, they noted that care has become increasingly complex. According to them, patients are generally older and have multiple age-related comorbidities. The nurses experience an increasing workload and work-associated pressure.

#### *Transparency & Accountability Goals*

An increasing administrative workload to account for the quality and costs of care. The administrative workload is, according to participants, out of balance. They said that this means that monitoring and registration is aimed not at improving nursing care, but at serving an external accountability goal to inform health insurers and the government.

They have little autonomy to change this policy. According to them, monitoring care results should help nurses to improve their own practice. For them, it means that nurses can reflect upon and discuss nursing issues related to quality of patient care, including the results of patient experiences.

#### **Conclusion**

The knowledge obtained from this research has resulted in a better understanding of how nurses regard their role in achieving positive patient experiences. From the viewpoint of the interviewed nurses, several elements are essential in relation to patient experiences of the quality of nursing care: clinically competent nurses, collaborative working relationships, autonomous nursing practice, adequate staffing, control over nursing practice, managerial support and patient-centred culture. These elements correspond to the eight 'essentials of magnetism'. If these elements are incorporated into the nursing practice, it will most likely result in more positive patient experiences of nursing care [10].

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