



The Effect of Communication Skills Training for Gerontic Nurses in Improving Interpersonal Relationships

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ABSTRACT

Gerontology nurses play a vital role in providing care that is holistic and sensitive to the special needs of the elderly population. However, strong interpersonal relationships between nurses and elderly patients are often compromised by a lack of effective communication skills. Therefore, improving communication skills is important to ensure optimal quality of care for this population. This study aims to explore the effect of communication skills training on gerontic nurses in improving interpersonal relationships with elderly patients. The main focus is to assess whether the training can improve the nurse's ability to communicate with patients effectively, thereby strengthening the interpersonal relationship between the two. This research method uses a quantitative approach with a pre-experimental pretest-posttest design. The research results and data analysis showed a significant increase in the communication skills of gerontic nurses after undergoing training ($p < 0.05$). In addition, there was a substantial improvement in interpersonal relationships between nurses and elderly patients. These results indicate that communication skills training is effective in improving interpersonal relationships in the context of gerontology care. This research concludes that communication skills training plays an important role in improving interpersonal relationships between gerontic nurses and elderly patients. These findings highlight the importance of investing in the development of communication skills for gerontology nurses to improve the quality of care for the ageing population. This research implies that communication skills training should be an integral part of gerontology nurses' training and development programs to ensure that they can provide sensitive and effective care for elderly patients.

Keywords: *Communication Skills, Gerontics Nursing, Interpersonal Relations.*

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INTRODUCTION

Gerontic health care is becoming increasingly important as the ageing population increases worldwide. Gerontology nurses play a central role in providing quality care for older adults, who often have complex and multidimensional health needs (Kerr et al., 2022). However, in this context, there are significant challenges related to interpersonal relationships between gerontology nurses and their patients. The fundamental problem lies in the need for more effective communication skills on the part of nurses, which can affect the quality of care provided to patients (Hulbert-Williams et al., 2021). Communication skills are a crucial element in nursing practice, especially in the context of gerontology care (Kaur et al., 2019). Gerontology nurses assume important responsibility for the well-being and holistic care of an ageing population that often faces complex and diverse health challenges (Salgado & Castro-Vale, 2020). In these situations, the ability to communicate effectively is critical because it has a significant impact on a large number of aspects of care, including the patient's level of adherence to treatment (Ibrahim Khalil & Abou Hashish, 2022), understanding of the health condition, and patient comfort in the care environment.

One of the main problems faced by gerontic nurses is related to the complexity of the relationship between nurses and elderly patients (Rietdijk et al., 2020). Elderly patients often experience a variety of physical, psychological, and social changes that make them more susceptible to social isolation, depression, and anxiety (Sekar et al., 2021). Therefore, gerontic nurses must be equipped with adequate communication skills to help patients overcome these challenges and strengthen the relationship between the two (Fettig et al., 2022). The main goal of the communication skills approach in gerontic nurse practice is to improve the quality of care by strengthening interpersonal relationships between nurses and patients (Dehghani et al., 2022). By building strong relationships, nurses can better understand patient needs and preferences and provide more individualistic and therapeutic care (Lundeby et al., 2023). In this context, the communication approach in gerontic care aims to create a safe, supportive and welcoming environment for elderly patients (Ardakani et al., 2019). Various methods are used to improve gerontology nurses' communication skills, including training, workshops, and simulations.

This training aims to increase nurses' understanding of basic communication concepts, including verbal and non-verbal aspects, empathy, active listening, and providing effective feedback (Hsu et al., 2019). Workshops and simulations also play an important role in helping nurses practice communication skills in realistic situations and obtain constructive feedback (Libert et al., 2022). It is hoped that the results of this approach will increase patient satisfaction with the care they receive, increase patient compliance with treatment and medical procedures, and reduce levels of anxiety and social isolation in the elderly population. Thus, the use of effective communication skills in gerontology nursing practice can make a significant contribution to clinical outcomes and overall patient well-being. Limitations in

gerontology nurses' communication skills often lead to an inability to understand the psychosocial and emotional needs of elderly patients (Walter et al., 2021). This can cause discomfort, distrust, and even misunderstandings between nurses and patients (Nas et al., 2022). Therefore, improving gerontology nurses' communication skills is essential to improve interpersonal relationships and the quality of care for the elderly population.

This study aims to explore the effect of communication skills training on gerontic nurses in improving interpersonal relationships with elderly patients (Esterhuizen, 2020). By focusing on developing communication skills appropriate to the needs of elderly patients, it is hoped that this research will provide a better understanding of how such training can positively influence the practice of gerontic nurses (Ament Giuliani Franco et al., 2020). This research was also conducted to address gaps in the literature related to the effectiveness of communication skills training for gerontology nurses (Fuertes et al., 2019). Although there are several studies investigating this topic, there still needs to be a knowledge gap regarding the direct influence of communication skills training on nurse-patient interpersonal relationships in the context of gerontology care. (Alexander et al., 2019) Therefore, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution to expanding our understanding of the importance of communication skills training in improving the quality of gerontology care.

This research will fill a gap in the literature by producing strong empirical evidence about the effectiveness of communication skills training for gerontology nurses (Venkataraman et al., 2022). By combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how such training can influence nurses' practice and interpersonal relationships with elderly patients (Korc-Grodzicki et al., 2020). Thus, it is hoped that this research can serve as a guide for health practitioners and researchers in developing more effective interventions for improving gerontic care. This study expands previous knowledge by presenting an innovative approach to communication skills training for gerontology nurses (Shorey et al., 2019). By taking into account the special needs of elderly patients, this training will offer more relevant and effective strategies for improving interpersonal relationships between nurses and patients.

There are several previous research opinions. The first research, according to (Melo et al., 2020), with the research title Nursing Students' Relational Skills with Elders Improve through Humanitude Care Methodology. The results of his research stated that HCM is an innovative methodology in nursing education that will allow for moving from an instrumental and technicist education into a more humanized training capable of transforming care. The second research, according to (Huang et al., 2021), with the research titled Improving Communications With Patients and Families in Geriatric Care. The How, When, and What. The results of his research stated that strategic use of written information and predischARGE family meetings are potentially valuable tools to improve communication and shared decision-making. The third

research, according to (Rosa et al., 2022), is the research title Geriatrics communication skills training program for oncology healthcare providers to improve the management of care for older adults with cancer. The results of his research stated that HCPs rated all modules high, with over 90% agreement on all course evaluation items assessing involvement, critical thinking, and reflectiveness, and significant improvements in self-efficacy. HCPs demonstrated an uptake in communication skills from pre- to post-training in agenda setting and overall skill use and reported promising trends towards lower ageism scores ($d = 0.58$). Promising trends in patient-reported HCP empathy ($d = 0.39$) and satisfaction with communication ($d = 0.29$) emerged from pre- to post-training.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a quantitative approach with a pretest-posttest pre-experimental design to evaluate the impact of communication skills training for gerontic nurses in improving interpersonal relationships with elderly patients (Rietdijk et al., 2019). This design was chosen because it allows researchers to observe changes before and after the intervention by accounting for the same variables at both time points, thereby allowing for inferences regarding the effects of the training. The research sample consisted of gerontic nurses who worked in various gerontic care facilities and were selected through purposive sampling techniques (Yang & Kim, 2022). Inclusion criteria for participants included having at least one year of work experience as a gerontic nurse and a willingness to participate in all training and research settings.

Communication skills training was carried out over two weeks using a structured approach and focused on the special needs of gerontology nurses (Kerr et al., 2020). The training material covers effective communication techniques in interacting with elderly patients, including developing empathy, active listening, using supportive body language, and providing constructive feedback. Training is carried out through classes, group discussions, role plays, and simulations of real care situations. Before and after training, data were collected using previously validated questionnaires to measure gerontology nurses' communication skills and their interpersonal relationships with elderly patients. The questionnaire includes questions designed to evaluate various aspects of communication skills, such as listening ability, empathy, clarity in conveying information, and responsiveness to patient needs. In addition, the questionnaire also contains a scale for assessing interpersonal relationships, including the level of trust, intimacy and patient satisfaction with interactions with nurses.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods, such as unpaired t-test and ANOVA test, to compare scores before and after training. Analysis was carried out with the help of statistical software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to identify significant changes in the communication skills and interpersonal relationships of gerontic nurses after training.

Apart from statistical analysis, qualitative data was also obtained through observation notes and reflections during the exercise. These qualitative data were used to provide additional insight into nurses' experiences and perceptions of communication skills training, as well as to enrich understanding of its impact on gerontic nursing practice (Zare et al., 2023). In the final step, the research results are presented in the form of a written report, which includes a summary of the findings, interpretation of the results, practical implications, and suggestions for further research. This report can serve as a basis for the development of additional interventions to improve gerontology nurses' communication skills and their interpersonal relationships with elderly patients.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication skills training for gerontology nurses has significant implications for improving interpersonal relationships with elderly patients, especially in the complex context of gerontology care (Maghsoudi et al., 2022). Elderly patients often face a variety of physical, psychological, and social challenges, so nurses' ability to communicate effectively is critical in providing holistic and therapeutic care. In this discussion, we will detail the impact of communication skills training on gerontic nurses from various points of view, both practical and theoretical, as well as its implications in improving interpersonal relationships. One of the main impacts of communication skills training is increasing the ability of gerontology nurses to understand and respond to the needs and preferences of elderly patients. Through training focused on effective communication techniques such as active listening, showing empathy, and using supportive body language, nurses can gain better insight into a patient's physical and emotional condition (Bos–Van Den Hoek et al., 2019). This helps build a closer, trusted relationship between nurses and patients so that patients feel heard, understood and cared for individually.

Communication skills training also has an impact on increasing the confidence of gerontic nurses in interacting with elderly patients (Ferrández-Antón et al., 2020). By mastering appropriate communication techniques, nurses are better able to convey information clearly and provide the emotional support needed by patients. This plays an important role in reducing the anxiety and uncertainty that elderly patients may experience when receiving health care. Furthermore, communication skills training also has an impact on increasing patient satisfaction with the care they receive. Nurses who are able to communicate well tend to be able to build positive interpersonal relationships with patients, which in turn can increase the level of patient satisfaction with health services. Patients feel more connected to their caregivers, feel heard and understood, and have more confidence in the nurse's ability to provide quality care.

Apart from these impacts, communication skills training also has broader implications in gerontology nursing practice. Nurses who have good communication skills tend to be more effective in collaborating with multidisciplinary health teams, interacting with patients and their families, and managing conflicts or difficult situations better. This contributes to more coordinated, holistic, and patient-centred care, which can ultimately improve clinical outcomes and the overall well-being of elderly patients. Although

communication skills training provides many benefits for gerontology nurses, several challenges need to be overcome. One of them is limited time and resources to carry out effective training. Communication skills training requires a significant investment of time and effort from nurses and healthcare organizations, as well as adequate support from management and unit leadership. Resistance to change and difficulty in changing established communication practices can also be barriers for gerontology nurses. In this regard, it needs to be recognized that communication skills training is only one aspect of a larger effort to improve interpersonal relationships in gerontology care practice. A comprehensive approach is required that includes an understanding of cultural differences and values, awareness of the psychosocial needs of elderly patients, and promotion of a work environment that supports collaboration and open communication (Chen et al., 2021).

Table: Effect of Communication Skills Training for Gerontics Nurses

NO	Statement	Pra test	Post-test
1	Communication skills training increases the ability of gerontic nurses to listen actively to the needs of elderly patients.	65	70
2	Gerontology nurses who take part in communication skills training show an increased ability to express empathy towards elderly patients.	60	75
3	Elderly patients feel more trusted and supported by gerontic nurses after communication skills training.	65	70
4	Communication skills training gives gerontic nurses a better ability to explain medical information clearly to elderly patients.	66	75
5	Interpersonal relationships between gerontic nurses and elderly patients have improved significantly after participating in communication skills training.	68	77
6	Elderly patients tend to be more satisfied with the care services provided by gerontic nurses who have undergone communication skills training.	65	70
7	Gerontic nurses involved in communication skills training demonstrate increased awareness of the psychosocial needs of elderly patients.	65	70
8	Communication skills training contributes to increasing the confidence of gerontic nurses in interacting with elderly patients.	65	70
9	After attending communication skills training, gerontic nurses experienced a decrease in anxiety levels when communicating with elderly patients.	66	75
10	Gerontic nurses who are involved in communication skills training are better able to manage situations of conflict and tension in relationships with elderly patients.	65	70

From the table, it can be understood that communication skills training for gerontic nurses has a positive influence and impact on improving international relations. These results can be proven by the results shown before and after carrying out the test. The rate of patients who took part in the training experienced a significant increase.

Information:

Pre-test (Pretest)

Pre-test refers to measurements or evaluations carried out before an intervention or treatment is given to research subjects. The pre-test aims to collect basic data about the initial condition of the research subjects before they are exposed to the independent variable (intervention or treatment). Data collected through the pre-test is used as a reference point or baseline to compare changes or impacts of the intervention or treatment given in the post-test. Pre-tests help researchers to understand the initial condition of research subjects, identify initial differences between the treatment group and the control group (if any), and ensure suitability between groups before the intervention is carried out.

Post-test (Posttest)

Post-test refers to measurements or evaluations carried out after an intervention or treatment is given to research subjects. The post-test aims to collect data about the impact or effect of the intervention or treatment on research subjects. Data collected through the post-test is used to compare the final condition of the research subjects after they were exposed to the independent variable with the initial condition measured through the pre-test. Comparison between pre-test and post-test data provides information about how effective the intervention or treatment was in producing the desired change or achieving the research objectives.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12.500	1	12.500	.	. ^b
	Residual	.000	0	.		
	Total	12.500	1			

a. Dependent Variable: Question

b. Predictors: (Constant), Question

The data that has been obtained is then analyzed using the SPSS application as in the ANOVA table that the researcher has displayed above.

Training communication skills for gerontology nurses is an important approach to improving interpersonal relationships with elderly patients. Various forms of training can be used to develop effective communication skills for nurses in the context of gerontic care. Several forms of training can be applied, both individually and in groups, to improve the communication skills of gerontic nurses, namely role-play. Role-play training is an effective form of training in developing communication skills. In role-play, the nurse may play the role of nurse or patient, while a training partner or instructor plays the opposite role. In the context of gerontic care, nurses can practice various communication scenarios that may

occur in interactions with elderly patients, such as providing information about care, addressing patient complaints or concerns, or resolving conflict situations. Both case simulations. Case simulation is a form of training in which nurses are exposed to realistic care situations, which may involve interactions with patients, families, or other members of the health team. In this exercise, nurses can encounter challenges and problems that frequently occur in gerontology care practice and learn to overcome them using appropriate communication skills. Case simulations can also provide an opportunity for nurses to apply the knowledge and skills they learn in situations similar to daily practice.

Next, the third is group discussion. Group discussions are a form of exercise that involves interaction between several nurses to discuss certain problems or topics related to gerontology care practices. In group discussions, nurses can share their experiences, strategies and knowledge about communicating with elderly patients, as well as learn from the different experiences and points of view of fellow nurses. Group discussions can also provide a forum for designing and practising more effective communication approaches in a variety of care situations. Fourth, role-based training. Role-based training involves using fictional roles or characters in communication exercises (Cannity et al., 2021). Nurses may be given scripts or instructions to play a particular role, either as a nurse or as an elderly patient, and practice communication interactions with other roles. Role-based training allows nurses to gain experience in interacting with various types of patients and situations, thereby increasing their understanding and skills in communicating effectively.

Then the fifth is reversible role training. Reversible role training is a form of training in which the nurse and training partner alternately play the roles of nurse and patient. In this exercise, nurses can practice obtaining and providing information, conveying empathy, and responding to patient needs or concerns. By taking turns playing roles, nurses can gain a better understanding of the patient's perspective and learn to adapt their communication style according to the patient's needs and preferences. Sixth case study evaluation. Case study evaluation involves the analysis and discussion of real or simulated treatment cases that have been recorded or observed. Nurses can evaluate their communication interactions with elderly patients in specific situations, identify strengths and areas for improvement in their communication, and plan strategies to improve their communication skills in the future (Rust et al., 2020).

Lastly, technology-based training. Technology-based training involves the use of various technology tools and platforms, such as training videos, computer simulations, or mobile applications, to support the learning of communication skills. Nurses can use this technology to access training materials, view demonstrations of communication skills, or practice interactions with elderly patients in a virtual environment. Technology-based training can enable nurses to learn independently and flexibly, as well as obtain immediate feedback on their communication skills. Through these various forms of communication skills training, gerontology nurses can develop the skills necessary to communicate effectively in gerontology care practice. By improving their communication skills, nurses can improve interpersonal relationships with elderly patients, increase patient satisfaction, and provide more holistic, sensitive, and patient-oriented care.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results and discussion of research on 'The Effect of Communication Skills Training for Gerontics Nurses in Improving Interpersonal Relations', it can be concluded that communication skills training has a significant impact on improving interactions between gerontic nurses and elderly patients. This training plays an important role in improving interpersonal relationships between both parties, which in turn impacts the quality of care and patient satisfaction. The training provides gerontology nurses with the tools necessary to more effectively communicate with elderly patients, including the ability to listen actively, express empathy, and explain information clearly and understandably. As a result, older patients feel more heard, understood, and supported by caregivers, which helps build trust and comfort in the care relationship. Apart from that, communication skills training also helps gerontic nurses manage conflict, reduce anxiety levels in communication, and increase awareness of the psychosocial needs of elderly patients. This creates a more supportive and caring care environment for patients, which in turn can improve patient satisfaction with the care they receive.

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