

Enhancing Patient Satisfaction: A Qualitative Investigation of Patients' Expectations of Nurses and Nursing Care

Abstract

Patient satisfaction is a vital indicator of the quality of healthcare services, and understanding patients' expectations is crucial for enhancing their satisfaction. This qualitative investigation aims to explore patients' expectations of nurses and nursing care to identify areas for improvement and optimize patient experiences. Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, a diverse sample of patients from various healthcare settings shared their perspectives on nurses' roles and the care they provide. The findings revealed key themes, including the importance of compassionate and empathetic care, nurses' competence and expertise, effective communication, respect and dignity, and continuity and coordination of care. These findings highlight the need for healthcare organizations to align nursing practice with patient expectations, enhancing patient satisfaction, and ultimately improving healthcare outcomes. Incorporating these insights into nursing education and practice can promote patient-centered care and contribute to a more positive healthcare environment.

Keywords: Patient satisfaction • Nursing care • Healthcare services

Introduction

The role of nurses in healthcare settings is pivotal, as they play a crucial part in delivering quality patient care. Understanding patient's expectations of nurses and nursing care is vital for enhancing patient satisfaction and optimizing healthcare outcomes [1]. Qualitative research methodologies provide valuable insights into the subjective experiences and perceptions of individuals. In this article, we delve into a qualitative inquiry to explore patients' expectations regarding nurses and nursing care.

Nurses, as one of the main and influential members of the healthcare teams, play a critical role in patient care. Moreover, awareness about the patients' concerns, needs, and expectations is of utmost importance for the researchers and providers of nursing care. During the past decades, health researchers have noticed the patients' concerns about their disease and medical care. Thus, understanding and meeting the patient's expectations are one of the major objectives of nursing profession for achieving efficient care for the patients [2].

Methodology

To explore patients' expectations, a qualitative research approach was adopted, employing in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. A diverse sample of patients from different age groups, genders, and medical conditions was recruited from various healthcare settings, including hospitals, clinics, and long-term care facilities. The sample size was determined based on theoretical saturation, ensuring that a sufficient range of perspectives was captured.

Transcribed data were analyzed using conventional qualitative content analysis. In this way, each transcribed interview was read for several times and the primary codes were extracted. Finally, based on similarity and content, the subcategories were used to make the main categories. To ensure trustworthiness of data, continuous investigation of the data, peer check and member check were performed [3]. Moreover, the objectivity of the data was determined through continuous, accurate, and proper treatment of all stages of the research

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study and clarity of the research method. Also, using a team approach in data analysis, the reliability of the results was confirmed.

Data collection and analysis

In-depth interviews and focus group discussions were conducted using semi-structured interview guides, allowing participants to express their expectations openly. The interviews and discussions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for subsequent analysis. Thematic analysis, a widely used qualitative analysis method, was employed to identify common themes and patterns within the data. The analysis involved iterative processes of coding, categorization, and interpretation [4].

Discussion

The qualitative inquiry revealed several key themes that encompassed patients' expectations regarding nurses and nursing care

Compassionate and empathetic care: Patients emphasized the importance of nurses demonstrating empathy, kindness, and compassion. They valued nurses who listened attentively, acknowledged their emotions, and provided emotional support during challenging times [5].

Competence and expertise: Patients expected nurses to possess a high level of clinical competence and expertise. They wanted nurses to be knowledgeable, skilled, and confident in delivering safe and effective care. Patients also emphasized the importance of nurses keeping up with advancements in healthcare to provide evidence-based care.

All the patients taking part in the present study mentioned their education by nurses as one of their major expectations and believed that educating the patients regarding their disease, experiments, examinations, disease stages, disease future, and diet comprises a main part of nursing care. In the same line, Noohi and Pouraboli showed that although the patients had a high amount of educational expectations and tendency to gain information from the nurses, their educational needs had not been desirably met, resulting in their dissatisfaction [6]. Goupy et al. also showed that, in both types of care, the lowest level of satisfaction was related to the educational dimensions and providing the patients with the necessary information. Unfortunately, in spite of the great importance of patient education, this issue is rarely planned and

performed as a formal process during the patients' hospital stay and is mostly carried out informally during the nursing care and the patients' activities. Nurses should examine the patients and identify their needs and, according to their educational needs, prioritize, plan, perform, and assess the patient training programs based on their level of education, culture, facilities, and duration of hospital stay. Another important dimension of the patients' expectations from nurses and nursing care was comprehensive or holistic care and the time spent by nurses for the patients [7]. The patients expected the nurses to comprehensively take care of them, build a friendly relationship with them, listen to them, speak with them calmly, meet their needs, reduce their pain, follow up their pain, be with them frequently, and respond to their needs immediately. Jolaei et al. showed that caring presence of the nurses is one of the major dimensions of actual care from the patients' as well as their companions' point of view. Moreover, Benner believes that the nurses' physical presence by the patients for doing the daily duties is not enough for responding to their needs; the patients' psychological as well as emotional needs should be taken into account, as well. In that study, not caring for the patients did not mean lack of physical presence; on the other hand, it referred to being present just for doing one's duties [8].

Effective communication: Clear and effective communication was highly valued by patients. They wanted nurses to communicate in a manner that was easily understandable, avoiding jargon and using simple language. Patients appreciated nurses who actively involved them in care decisions, shared information transparently, and provided regular updates on their condition.

Respect and dignity: Patients expected nurses to treat them with respect and maintain their dignity. This involved aspects such as maintaining privacy, ensuring modesty during personal care, and addressing patients by their preferred names. Patients highlighted the importance of feeling valued and heard as individuals [9].

Continuity and coordination of care: Patients expressed a desire for continuity and coordination of care, especially in settings with multiple healthcare professionals involved. They expected nurses to collaborate effectively with other team members, ensure

seamless transitions, and provide consistent care throughout their healthcare journey [10].

Conclusion

This qualitative inquiry provides valuable insights into patients' expectations regarding nurses and nursing care. Patients desire compassionate and empathetic care, competent and knowledgeable nurses, effective communication, respect and dignity, as well as continuity and coordination of care. Understanding these expectations can assist healthcare organizations in developing strategies to meet patient needs and enhance the overall patient experience. We found that cardiac patients have diverse expectations from the nurses and nursing care. Nurses, as the main personnel of medical team, should include these expectations in their care program and management of cardiac patients. Paying attention to patient's expectations and needs resulted in patient's satisfaction and decrease in hospital stay. By incorporating these findings into nursing education and practice, nurses can deliver patient-centered care that aligns with patients' expectations and promotes positive healthcare outcomes.

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