

The Importance of Ethical Communication in the Medical System

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Abstract

The purpose of the article is to present the importance of ethical communication in the medical system seen through the eyes of Romanian doctors. The process of communication today is extremely important. It is part of individual or community activity. In the post-pandemic period, marked by an increase in patients' fears about the future of new diseases (pandemics), measures must be taken to increase patients' trust in the medical system. All the advances made in technology, but especially in medical research, allow us to have better health management today. Unquestionable management is based on ethical communication and quality. It is important to determine how this communication is seen by the medical staff.

Key words: ethical communication, communication process, the importance of communication, communication perceived by doctors

J.E.L. classification: M14, I14, I18

1. Introduction

The problem of communication is still a major problem of our society. Communication affects, for a fixed or indefinite period, directly or indirectly the life of people but also of communities and the whole society. Communication is a bond for individuals in a community (Kee at al., 2018).

Communication is a complex phenomenon of information transmission (Kennedy at al., 2017). The way in which communication is done is essential. Due to the economic and social situation marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, communication has become extremely important in the medical sector. The progress registered in terms of technological development, research and the development of organizations in the medical system has led to a change in the management of organizations in the medical system. Communication being the basis for management, it is necessary to analyze this communication from all points of view.

The article highlights the importance of communication in the medical system as seen by doctors.

2. Theoretical background

Recent research has demonstrated that there are strong positive relationships between a healthcare team member's communication skills and a patient's ability to follow medical advice. The patient must be able to self-manage a chronic condition (Bardosono at al., 2018). The patient must adopt preventive health behaviors.

Studies over the past three decades demonstrate that the very ability of the clinician to explain, listen, and empathize can have a profound effect on biological and functional health outcomes (Bhise at al., 2018). The effect also affects the satisfaction of the patients but also the satisfaction of the attending physician in terms of the care experience. Furthermore, communication between members of the healthcare team influences the quality of working relationships. It influences job satisfaction. It influences the avoidance of malpractice situations (Chandra at al., 2018). Communication among healthcare team members has a profound impact on patient safety.

Clinicians as well as other members of the health care team are engaged in a very large number of interactions with patients and their relatives (probably in the order of thousands during a career year), depending on the specialty (Demirtas at al., 2011).

Medical faculties in Romania have not, over time, paid too much attention to the training of doctors in terms of the doctor-patient relationship. Communication training was almost non-existent for a long time.

Similar to other healthcare procedures, communication skills can be learned and improved. Improving communication skills obviously requires commitment and practice.

3. Research methodology

The purpose of the research is to analyze how doctors and hospital managers perceive the importance of medical communication with patients in organizations in the medical sector.

How important is medical communication? How do doctors and hospital managers relate to doctor-patient communication? I spoke with doctors and managers of medical units in Romania on this topic between January and March 2023. The basic question asked during the interviews was "How important is medical communication, doctor-patient communication?"

Interviews provide much more detailed information on a particular subject than information obtained through other methods of data collection.

Compliance with the legal provisions on the protection of personal data was ensured. For anonymization, the persons included in the study sample will be mentioned only by function.

4. Findings

Communication between doctor and patient is essential. If the patient understands what is to be done to him then he will understand the limits of the treatment. The patient will understand that accepting the treatment leads to the acceptance of complications that can happen anywhere in this world (unforeseen). The patient will understand exactly what is happening to him. Thus, it will be much easier to manage the problems that may arise in the case of these complications (primary surgeon).

The communication between the doctor and the patient at the moment suffers a lot. This is due to the fact that the doctor, for several reasons, does not have enough time to give to the patient. Doctor-patient communication also suffers due to the fault of the patient who does not ask for enough details and simply goes on the idea that "the doctor knows better what he has to do" (primary surgeon).

One problem is that no one teaches you how to communicate effectively in the doctor-patient relationship. During the six years of college, especially the more experienced medical personnel did not have a communication course. In hospitals there is often no opportunity to do a communication course, the desire of some doctors is to do such communication courses. This is because often the doctor-patient relationship is cracked due to lack of effective communication, time crunch, high pressure on doctors. Learning how to communicate effectively and especially for times of crisis is effective (primary physician surgeon).

The most important aspect for a doctor is to gain the trust of his patients. This trust is also achieved through the way he communicates with the patient. In order to obtain a very good result of the medical act, the doctor must gain the trust of the patient. They must make him understand that only open communication based on trust will help the patient in his treatment (primary physician pediatric surgeon).

The doctor's goal is to make the patient well. The physical, biological indicators of the patient must be good. The patient must be satisfied, satisfied, be happy. Without effective communication this cannot be achieved. If the patient still believes that he is sick, it is in vain that medical tests show that he is very well. That is why communication is needed (primary physician, pediatric surgeon).

In the complaints concerning cases of malpractice, a very large percentage do not concern aspects that indicate a case of malpractice. Rather, it targets communication errors, lack of empathy, compassion. communication (primary physician and pediatric surgeon).

Communication, collaboration and honesty are essential in medicine. They are also essential in the doctor-patient relationship. Effective communication must be used. Open discussions should be held and adapted to the level of each patient. Only by adapting to the level of understanding of each patient will it be possible to establish a common goal (hospital manager).

The patient evaluates the medical record. He evaluates his state of health through his prism,

depending on his and/or his relatives' satisfaction level (hospital manager).

The doctor-patient relationship is clearly a relationship based on mutual respect. It is based on empathy and communication. The doctor must have some kind of empathy to be able to relate and communicate with the patient. The doctor must have a kind of empathy to be able to make the patient feel as comfortable as possible during the consultation and during the treatments (clinical director).

There are also unpleasant situations in which patients become recalcitrant. The doctor must understand that it is a situation that he must try to overcome. In these crisis situations communication can help a lot. There has to be some kind of chemistry in the doctor-patient relationship as well, and communication techniques can create that chemistry. Relationships are natural, they are natural, doctors just need to use communication techniques (clinic director).

Effective communication is something you don't learn in college. Medical practice teaches you over time. In a clinic, communication between the medical team is essential. The collaboration between the medical team must be very good. This is reflected in the daily work, in the results with patients (head of department).

It is very important to know the issues of nursing case management, care and communication. Problems must be solved promptly and efficiently (head of department).

Communication with family is very important. This is one of the key points in the medical act. Effective communication is unfortunately not taught in school. Experienced doctors did not benefit from such training. They learned from everyday medical practice (head of department).

Communication is the main thing that doctors need to work on and pay attention to. The patient has every right to know what disease he has, to be explained what he must do about his disease, what treatment he must take, what he is allowed to do and what he is not allowed to do because this will increase his trust in the doctor. If the patient trusts the doctor, listens to his advice, it means that the doctor has achieved his goal, namely that the patient follows the prescribed treatment so that his health is safe (specialist cardiologist).

Doctor-patient communication is very important especially for the specialty of genetic diseases, rare diseases where the patient needs to have a genetic counselor. Emphasis should be placed on communication and empathy. In the case of rare diseases for which there is no curative treatment solution, communication and support to patients and their families is vital. They are essential for adherence to treatment and obtaining the best possible quality of life (head of UMF discipline).

Communication, and especially empathy between patient and doctor, is essential. The patient is in distress. He does not know most of the time what the future holds and how serious the disease he has is. The doctor in such situations must feel psychologically and emotionally, the patient in front of aa. He must objectively communicate the data about the disease. He must communicate in a manner that the patient can assimilate with some ease (primary cardiologist).

How to communicate the status of the disease and its evolution, what happened in retrospect is important? In order for the patient to be balanced and compliant in the long term, he must have very good communication with the doctor. He must trust the doctor. If he does not have confidence, the treatment of the disease will not go well (primary cardiologist).

A summary of the research results is presented in Table 1.

Table no. 1 Communication seen through the lens of doctors

<i>Communication is essential in the doctor-patient relationship, but also between the medical team, doctors and management.</i>
<i>The most important aspect for a doctor is to gain the trust of his patients</i>
<i>Communication, collaboration and honesty are essential in medicine and in the doctor-patient relationship.</i>
<i>The doctor-patient relationship is clearly a relationship based on mutual respect and empathy, communication.</i>
<i>Effective communication is something you don't learn in college, but medical practice teaches you over time</i>
<i>Communication is the main thing that medical personnel need to work on and pay attention to</i>
<i>Communication, but especially empathy between patient and doctor, are essential</i>
<i>All staff must have communication skills</i>
<i>For pediatricians, communication with the mother is important</i>

<i>Communication can help the medical staff to have a good relationship with the patient, to achieve compliance, collaboration.</i>
<i>The relationship with patients is based on mutual respect and communication.</i>
<i>Medical personnel should not choose a profession in the medical field if they do not love people, if they do not empathize with them, do not understand their sufferings and do not have that dose of compassion that patients expect.</i>
<i>The incidence of adverse events associated with medical assistance determined by communication deficiencies is still quite high, in the total of adverse events.</i>

Source: Own processing after Predilă (2023)

5. Conclusions

All doctors included in the research sample stated that communication is essential for the medical system. In the current medical system there are still vulnerabilities that must be removed over time, as much as possible.

Empathy and honest communication are needed in the medical system. In order to have ethical communication, training in communication in the medical system is needed.

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