



ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERPROFESSIONAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN NURSING SPECIALISTS AND MIDWIFERY TECHNICIANS IN IMPROVING MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH

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Abstract

Interprofessional collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians is crucial for improving maternal and child health outcomes. This study aims to assess the effectiveness of collaboration between these healthcare professionals in Hafer Albatin hospitals, Saudi Arabia. A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving a survey of 150 nursing specialists and midwifery technicians and semi-structured interviews with 20 healthcare professionals and 30 patients. The survey assessed perceptions of collaboration, job satisfaction, and patient outcomes, while the interviews explored experiences and challenges related to interprofessional collaboration. The findings revealed that effective collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians was associated with improved patient outcomes, increased job satisfaction, and enhanced quality of care. However, challenges such as communication barriers, role ambiguity, and hierarchical structures were identified as obstacles to effective collaboration. The study highlights the need for interventions to foster interprofessional collaboration, including communication skills training, role clarification, and supportive organizational policies.

Keywords: interprofessional collaboration, nursing specialists, midwifery technicians, maternal health, child health, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

Maternal and child health is a global priority, with a focus on reducing maternal and infant mortality rates and improving overall health outcomes (World Health Organization, 2019). In Saudi Arabia, there have been significant efforts to enhance maternal and child health services, including the promotion of interprofessional collaboration among healthcare professionals (Al-Hanawi et al., 2020). Interprofessional collaboration involves healthcare professionals from



different disciplines working together to provide comprehensive and coordinated care to patients (World Health Organization, 2010).

Nursing specialists and midwifery technicians play crucial roles in maternal and child health care, with their unique skills and expertise contributing to the delivery of high-quality care (Al-Yateem et al., 2020). Effective collaboration between these healthcare professionals has been associated with improved patient outcomes, increased patient satisfaction, and enhanced job satisfaction among healthcare providers (Fallatah et al., 2020). However, there are challenges to achieving effective interprofessional collaboration, such as communication barriers, role ambiguity, and hierarchical structures (Al-Qahtani et al., 2021).

This study aims to assess the effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in improving maternal and child health outcomes in Hafer Albatin hospitals, Saudi Arabia. The study also explores the challenges and facilitators of effective collaboration and provides recommendations for enhancing interprofessional collaboration in maternal and child health care.

Literature

Review

Interprofessional collaboration has been recognized as a key strategy for improving healthcare quality and patient outcomes (World Health Organization, 2010). In the context of maternal and child health, collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians is essential for providing comprehensive and coordinated care (Al-Yateem et al., 2020). A systematic review by Fallatah et al. (2020) found that effective collaboration between these healthcare professionals was associated with reduced maternal and infant mortality rates, improved patient satisfaction, and increased job satisfaction among healthcare providers.

However, achieving effective interprofessional collaboration is not without challenges. A qualitative study by Al-Qahtani et al. (2021) identified communication barriers, role ambiguity, and hierarchical structures as major obstacles to collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in Saudi Arabia. The study highlighted the need for interventions to address these challenges, such as communication skills training, role clarification, and supportive organizational policies.

Other studies have emphasized the importance of education and training in fostering interprofessional collaboration. A study by Al-Hanawi et al. (2020) found that healthcare professionals who received interprofessional education reported higher levels of collaboration and job satisfaction compared to those who did not. The study recommended the integration of interprofessional education into undergraduate and postgraduate curricula for nursing and midwifery programs.

Furthermore, organizational factors play a significant role in facilitating or hindering interprofessional collaboration. A study by Al-Mutairi et al. (2019) found that supportive

leadership, clear policies and protocols, and adequate resources were essential for promoting collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in Saudi Arabian hospitals.

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey and qualitative semi-structured interviews. The survey sample consisted of 150 nursing specialists and midwifery technicians recruited from Hafer Albatin hospitals, including King Khalid General Hospital and Maternity and Children Hospital. The survey questionnaire assessed perceptions of interprofessional collaboration, job satisfaction, and patient outcomes using a 5-point Likert scale.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 healthcare professionals (10 nursing specialists and 10 midwifery technicians) and 30 patients who received maternal and child health services at the participating hospitals. The interviews explored experiences and challenges related to interprofessional collaboration, as well as perceptions of the impact of collaboration on patient care. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results

Survey

Findings

The survey results indicated high levels of perceived interprofessional collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians ($M=4.23$, $SD=0.68$). Participants reported positive perceptions of the impact of collaboration on patient outcomes ($M=4.35$, $SD=0.59$) and job satisfaction ($M=4.12$, $SD=0.75$). Table 1 presents the mean scores for key survey items.

Survey Item	Mean Score (SD)
Interprofessional collaboration is effective in our hospital	4.23 (0.68)
Collaboration improves patient outcomes	4.35 (0.59)
Collaboration increases job satisfaction	4.12 (0.75)
Communication is effective between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians	3.98 (0.82)
Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined	3.87 (0.91)

*Interview**Findings*

The thematic analysis of the interviews revealed four main themes: 1) benefits of collaboration, 2) challenges to collaboration, 3) facilitators of collaboration, and 4) patient perspectives.

1. **Benefits of Collaboration**
Healthcare professionals and patients highlighted the benefits of interprofessional collaboration in improving maternal and child health outcomes. Participants reported that collaboration led to more comprehensive and coordinated care, timely interventions, and improved patient satisfaction. A nursing specialist stated, "When we work together with the midwifery technicians, we can provide better care to our patients. We complement each other's skills and expertise."
2. **Challenges to Collaboration**
Participants identified several challenges to effective interprofessional collaboration, including communication barriers, role ambiguity, and hierarchical structures. Some nursing specialists and midwifery technicians reported difficulties in understanding each other's roles and responsibilities, leading to confusion and duplication of efforts. A midwifery technician noted, "Sometimes there is a lack of clarity about who is responsible for certain tasks, which can lead to misunderstandings and delays in patient care."
3. **Facilitators of Collaboration**
Participants identified several facilitators of effective interprofessional collaboration, including communication skills training, role clarification, and supportive organizational policies. Healthcare professionals emphasized the importance of open and respectful communication, as well as clear protocols and guidelines for collaboration. A nursing specialist remarked, "Having regular team meetings and discussions helps us to communicate better and resolve any issues that arise."
4. **Patient Perspectives**
Patients expressed positive views of interprofessional collaboration, noting that it contributed to better care coordination and improved outcomes. Patients appreciated the comprehensive care they received from both nursing specialists and midwifery technicians. A patient stated, "I felt well-supported throughout my pregnancy and delivery because the nurses and midwives worked together to provide me with the best care possible."

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in improving maternal and child health outcomes in Hafer Albatin hospitals, Saudi Arabia. The survey results indicate high levels of perceived collaboration and positive perceptions of its impact on patient outcomes and job satisfaction. These findings align with previous research that has demonstrated the benefits of interprofessional collaboration in maternal and child health care (Fallatah et al., 2020; Al-Yateem et al., 2020).

The interviews revealed valuable insights into the challenges and facilitators of effective collaboration. Communication barriers, role ambiguity, and hierarchical structures were identified as major obstacles to collaboration, consistent with the findings of Al-Qahtani et al. (2021). Participants emphasized the importance of communication skills training, role clarification, and supportive organizational policies in overcoming these challenges and fostering effective collaboration.

The study also highlighted the positive perceptions of patients regarding interprofessional collaboration. Patients appreciated the comprehensive and coordinated care they received from nursing specialists and midwifery technicians working together. This finding underscores the importance of collaboration in enhancing patient satisfaction and outcomes.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has some limitations that should be acknowledged. The sample was limited to nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in Hafer Albatin hospitals, and the findings may not be generalizable to other healthcare settings or regions. Future research could explore interprofessional collaboration in different contexts and include a larger sample size.

Additionally, the study relied on self-reported measures of collaboration and patient outcomes, which may be subject to response bias. Future studies could incorporate objective measures of collaboration and patient outcomes, such as clinical indicators and health service utilization data.

Conclusion

This study provides evidence of the effectiveness of interprofessional collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in improving maternal and child health outcomes in Hafer Albatin hospitals, Saudi Arabia. The findings highlight the benefits of collaboration in enhancing patient care, increasing job satisfaction, and improving patient satisfaction.

The study also identifies challenges to effective collaboration, such as communication barriers, role ambiguity, and hierarchical structures. To overcome these challenges, the study recommends interventions such as communication skills training, role clarification, and supportive organizational policies.

Healthcare organizations and policymakers should prioritize the promotion of interprofessional collaboration in maternal and child health care. This can be achieved through the integration of interprofessional education in nursing and midwifery curricula, the development of clear protocols and guidelines for collaboration, and the provision of resources and support for collaborative practice.

In conclusion, this study underscores the importance of interprofessional collaboration between nursing specialists and midwifery technicians in improving maternal and child health outcomes. By fostering effective collaboration, healthcare organizations can enhance the quality of care, increase patient satisfaction, and contribute to the achievement of global maternal and child health goals.

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