



## THE ROLE OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND PATIENT INVOLVEMENT IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF CARE DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Effective communication is an important factor in providing safe patient care. Communication failures in health care lead to serious medical errors that impact the quality of health care. Exposed patients experience psychological stress, work fatigue, fear and stigma, therefore effective communication is very important and must be carried out in the workplace. The aim of writing this literature review is to explain the role of effective communication between patients, families and health workers in improving the quality of health services during the Covid-19 pandemic. **Method:** This literature review was prepared by conducting a literature review of scientific articles published in the last 5 years, namely articles published from 2016 - 2021. The literature search was carried out on the PubMed, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar databases. The keywords used in the search are "effective communication", "quality of care". **Results:** An important strategy result during the COVID-19 pandemic is increasing the knowledge and skills of health workers in communicating with patients and families. Stress and fear arising from the pandemic are controlled with guidance and counseling from trusted doctors and health workers. Doctors and other health workers must be competent in effective consultation techniques. However, there are many factors that influence receiving information, such as social and cultural characteristics, gender, generation, language, beliefs, religion, and various other literacies. **Conclusion:** Understanding and practicing various communication strategies is very important for doctors and health workers to develop therapeutic relationships with COVID-19 patients. Communication can be done by utilizing technology to promote communication by integrating workstations with video conferencing software or adding communication via email and telephone is a solution strategy.

**Keywords:** Effective Communication, Quality of Health Services, COVID 19 Pandemic

### A. Introduction

Effective communication is an important factor in providing safe patient care. Communication failures in health care can cause serious medical errors that affect the quality of health services. (Shahid 2018), [1]. Communication in health care is correlated with increasing patient safety and



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reducing the number of adverse events (KTD). Health workers and patients realize that communication is very important for improving quality in health care and patient safety[1]. Patients who communicate effectively with health workers report greater satisfaction [2] and self-care efficacy[3] .The results of effective communication are important, because patients who manage their health can improve their quality of life and reduce health care costs [4]

Communication is a key element of the care experience and an important component of patient-centered care and the responsiveness of the health system. Studies have shown that effective communication facilitates improvements in patient physical health outcomes, care efficacy and self-care management [4]. Effective communication requires providers to clearly explain to patients and families about their condition, treatment details, and available treatment options[5]. The main goal of effective communication is to provide clear thinking and actual facts to improve the health of patients and families[6].

Uncertainty about COVID-19 and its spread is a real challenge for health communicators, including health workers in hospitals, in providing information about the conditions of this pandemic. The COVID 19 pandemic has changed communication practices. One of the clearest changes is in patient and family communication in inpatient care, including changes to patient- and family-centered care caused by isolation procedures and visitation policies during this pandemic [7]. One important concern During the COVID-19 pandemic, the widespread implementation of restricted visitation regulations prevented parents from staying with their children in hospitals, prohibited families from visiting sick or dying relatives, and hindered much-needed support for those with disabilities, physical or mental health[8]

Apart from that, this communication limitation is also caused by anxiety among the health care team due to fear of infection from patients who are not open in disclosing the condition of their illness. (Husain 2020) Clarity of honest and valid information during the Covid 19 pandemic is really needed by patients and health workers along with with the development of the Covid 19 pandemic. As expressed in an editorial in the Lancet in February, it concluded that: "There may be no way to prevent the COVID-19 Pandemic in this age of globalization, but verified information is the most effective prevention in overcoming anxiety."

On the other hand, taking steps to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus is the most important thing. Treatment during Covid-19 must be carried out humanely and to achieve this the involvement of patients and families must be strengthened [8] And what is no less important is that family members are servants of patient safety and an integral part of healing. (Griffin, Nurse, and Ipfcc 2020) Communication between family members and health professionals is routine and influences all aspects of patient care and how families cope during their relative's stay in the ICU. Critical illness and recovery are difficult for patients and family members, so honest, accurate, and patient- and family-focused communication is critical [9]

Patient-centered care is defined as providing care that is respectful of and responsive to the patient's preferences, needs, and values and ensuring that the patient's values guide all clinical decisions [10] Engagement of the family, patient, and health care team to collaborate is central of patient-centered care. Strategies for providing patient-centered care usually include family presence at the

bedside, regular and structured communication with family members, and multidisciplinary support [11]. This prepares patients and families for their roles in decision-making and care, with the goal of reducing families' experiences of anxiety, depression, and post-trauma following hospitalization. In implementing communication, patients can communicate effectively with health workers, for example by reminding health workers to use practices such as hand hygiene or checking surgical safety checklists. (Liang et al. 2018) Patient-centered care is expected to improve outcomes, their care, and can also reduce burnout and moral distress among physicians [12]

The aim of writing this literature review is to explain the role of effective communication between patients, families and health workers in improving the quality of health services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **B. Method**

This literature review was prepared by conducting a literature review of scientific articles published in the last 5 years, namely articles published from 2016 - 2021. The literature search was carried out on the PubMed, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar databases. The keywords used in the search are "effective communication", "quality of care", using the boolean operators "AND" and "OR". Meanwhile, in the Google School database, literature searches were added using the words "Covid 19 pandemic". All articles were imported into Mendeley, and duplicate selection was carried out. Then the selection continues by reading the title and abstract. Articles that are not suitable will be deleted and those that are suitable will be further selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria are articles that use English and Indonesian, peer reviewed articles, articles that discuss effective communication in patient-centered care practices and patient and family involvement. Selected articles will be further selected by reading the entire contents of the article.

### C. Result

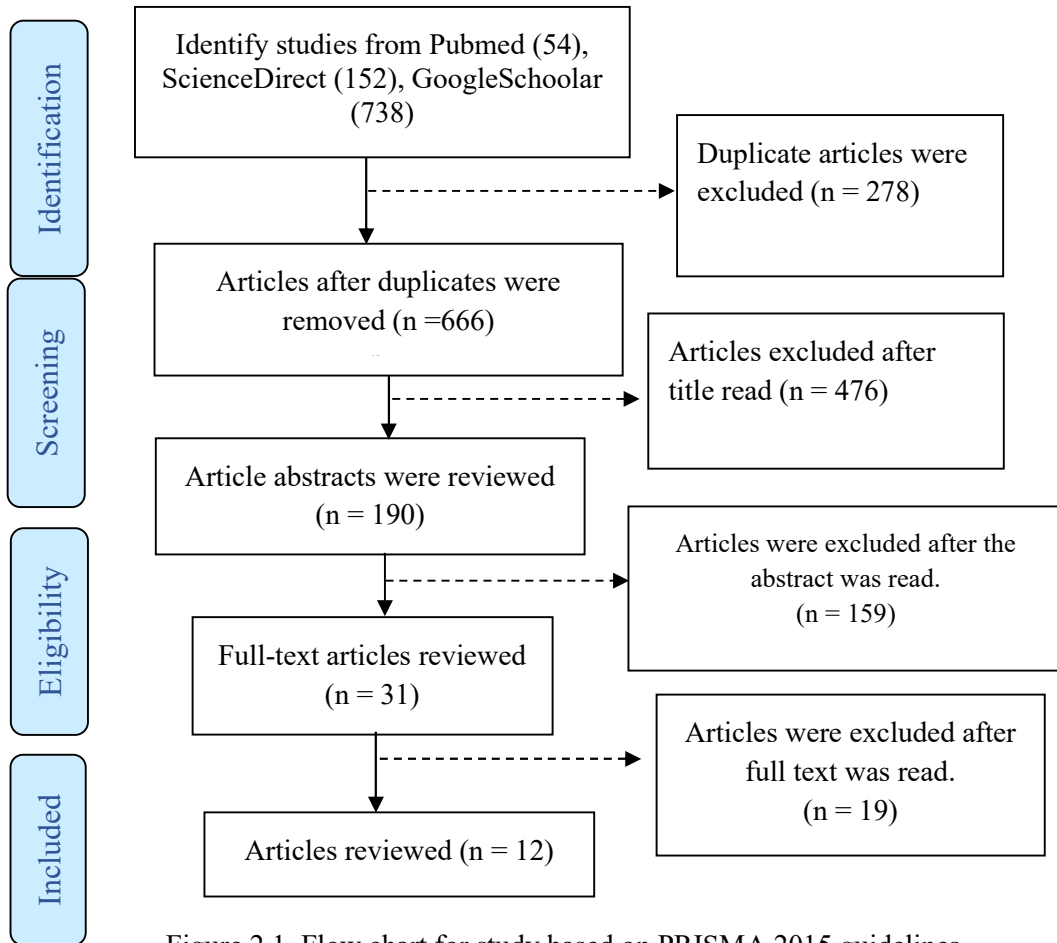


Figure 2.1. Flow chart for study based on PRISMA 2015 guidelines.

**Table 1. The role of effective communication in improving service quality during the COVID 19 pandemic**

Author's Name (Year)	Title	Article type	Results
Rosenbluth, G. <i>et al</i> (2020)[7] [7]	Communicating Effectively with Hospitalized Patients and Families during the COVID-19 Pandemic.	Perspectives in hospital medicine	Prioritizing effective communication, maintaining engagement with patients and families, and using technology in new ways will all help maintain high standards of care both in typical settings and in outbreak settings such as during this pandemic.

Reddy, B.V, Gupta, A (2020) [6]	Importance of effective communication during COVID-19 infodemic	Editorial	Understanding and practicing various communication strategies is essential for physicians and healthcare workers to develop therapeutic relationships with COVID-19 patients. Effective communication is the key to overcoming psychological stress in patients during the pandemic. Effective communication, if neglected, will create disparities for vulnerable populations and increase difficulties in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.
Dalton, L., Rapa, E. & Stein, A (2020) [13]	Protecting the psychological health of children through effective communication about COVID-19	Commentary	Providing information and prioritizing effective communication about life-threatening illnesses like COVID-19 with children is a critical component that has great benefits for the long-term psychological well-being of children and families.
Back, A, Tulskey, J A. Arnold, R M.(2020) [14]	Communication Skills in the Age of COVID-19	Ideas and opinions	Doctors and health workers must be trained to have communication skills. For doctors who have never undergone such training, the COVID-19 pandemic will likely be a demoralizing experience.
Fang, J; Liu, Y.T;  Ernest Y. Lee,E.Y, et al (2020) [15]	Telehealth Solutions for In-hospital Communication with Patients Under Isolation During COVID-19	Expert Commentary	Telehealth solutions in hospitals can address care gaps. Longitudinal study to measure the value of this tool for patients and providers in facilitating communication and improving quality of care

Author's Name (Year)	Title	Research Method	Sample / Population	Results Research
E.Wittenberg  J. Goldsmith,	Opportunities to improve COVID-19 provider	Systematic review	A total of 89 review sources, (n = 36 provider communication sources,	The research results show

Author's Name (Year)	Title	Research Method	Sample / Population	Results Research
C.Chen, et al (2020) [16]	communication resources:  A systematic review		n = 53 peer-reviewed articles)	Future development of COVID-19 communication resources should address interdisciplinary team members, communication with families, engagement strategies for culturally sensitive telehealth interactions, and support for provider moral distress.
Mackie BR et al., (2020) [9]	Application of the READY framework supports effective communication between health care providers and family members in intensive care, Australian Critical Care	Sequential mixed- methods design the paired t- test was used to compare the stionnaire scores.	26 multidisciplinary service providers  midwives (54%), pediatricians/neonatologists, trainees (15%), pediatric nurses/neonatal nurses and managers (12%), and sonographers (4%)	The research results show that communication between family members and health professionals is  routine practice and influences all aspects of patient care and  how families cope during their relative's stay in the ICU.

Author's Name (Year)	Title	Research Method	Sample / Population	Results Research
Ardakani, M; MorowatiSharifabad, M; Bahrami, et al (2019) [17]	Psychometric properties of the Persian questionnaire health action process approach on the effective communication between nurses and the patient	Cross-sectional study	300 nurses were randomly selected from four hospitals (75 nurses from each hospital).	The findings of this study confirm the reliability and validity of the HAPA structure in the context of effective communication between nurses and patients.
Wang, Y, Wan, Q., Guo, J., Jin, X., Zhou, W., Feng, X., & Shang, S. (2018) [18]	The influence of effective communication, perceived respect and willingness to collaborate on nurses' perceptions of nurse-physician	survey cross-sectional	971 registered nurses in nine hospitals	Effective communication, respect and willingness to collaborate significantly influence nurses' perceptions of nurse-physician collaboration. Hospital managers need to develop strategies to build professional respect for nurses, facilitate effective nurse-physician communication, and increase nurses' willingness to collaborate.
Chang, Yan Shing, et al (2020) [19]	Interventions to support effective communication	Mixed-methods systematic review	2 articles	The results of the study indicate that there is

Author's Name (Year)	Title	Research Method	Sample / Population	Results Research
	between maternity care staff and women in labour: A mixed-methods systematic review			insufficient evidence of effective communication interventions between maternity care staff and healthy mothers with term pregnancies during labor, birth and the immediate postnatal period..
Fukami, Tatsuya Uemura, Masakazu Terai, et al (2020)[1]	Enhanced hospital-wide communication and interaction by team training to improve patient safety	Survey	Between 100 and 200 employees attend each course, including non-healthcare providers, office workers, and others	Number of adverse events related to communication between employees in the hospital.  we slightly but significantly decrease as the number of training events increases
Mirzaei T ,; Kashian N, (2020)[4]	Revisiting Effective Communication Between Patients and Physicians: Cross-Sectional Questionnaire Study Comparing Text-Based Electronic Versus Face-to-	Web-based surveys	345 patients	The results of this study suggest that patients can achieve the same level of communication effectiveness with their physicians using IT-mediated communication as they do in



Author's Name (Year)	Title	Research Method	Sample / Population	Results Research
	Face Communication			comparable face-to-face (FtF) interactions, but patients perceive FtF communication to be a preferable medium than FtF communication. IT-mediated

#### D. Discussion

##### **Adapt effective communication to the core value of patient and family involvement.**

Effective communication will make it easier for patients to understand their involvement in decision making. Therefore, effective communication is an important component of patient autonomy. Health care teams must be able to help patients and families engage in care and best manage their hospital experience during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the entire system must adapt in the inpatient unit and directly align with several core values of family involvement and patient- and family-centered care, namely, (1) prioritizing communication, (2) maintaining active engagement with patients and families, and (3) improving communication with technology[7]

Prioritizing communication in treating COVID-19 patients in hospitals is very humane. Timely and clear communication can help healthcare workers manage patient and family expectations, build patient and family confidence, and reduce feelings of anxiety. Families generally acknowledged the importance of infection control and physical distancing measures, but feared reduced access to treatment rooms would lead to decreased communication. The family and patient each feel emotionally isolated. The precautions taken should not cut off communication and make already sick patients feel afraid[7]

Active involvement with patients and families can be maintained by communicating and building mutual understanding, as well as building relationships through human interactions. Maintaining a communication structure, whenever possible, strengthens understanding of roles and expectations, among patients. Adapting communication can be done as simply as inviting family participation while realizing that you have to maintain distance. Patients and families can be further involved through tasks/responsibilities, for example noting symptoms the patient experiences (e.g., difficulty breathing) or actions administered (e.g., how much water they drink).

By doing this, the anxiety of patients and caregivers who feel helpless and anxious can be controlled and make a useful contribution to medical care. Parents also expressed value in reinforcing the message that patients and families are experts on themselves and their loved ones. Healthcare teams can ask for their insights, questions, and concerns to show respect for their expertise. This will build trust and lead to feelings of togetherness and teamwork. In general, families emphasize the value of family involvement and communication under ideal conditions, and even more so during the upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic [7]

Many hospitals are leveraging technology to promote communication by integrating workstations with video conferencing software (e.g., Zoom, Skype) and even by adding communication via email and telephone. These alternative communication methods may provide patients with a more comfortable path to participate in their own care even after the pandemic. Pediatric patients may have strong opinions about their care but may be uncomfortable speaking in front of staff they do not know well. Telehealth, whiteboards, email, and limiting the number of attendants in the room may create a more approachable environment for these patients even in routine settings [7]

### **Virtual care is one strategy for effective communication during the COVID-19 pandemic**

Amid COVID-19, virtual care has been better received than ever. Nearly everything has gone virtual; families visit each other via Skype due to visitation restrictions. Virtual costs and accessibility become cheaper. However, safety remains paramount and demands inclusion in patient-centredness. Even though almost everything has become virtual, health workers' empathy must still be demonstrated. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) report entitled "Crossing the Quality Chasm" mentions six important improvement efforts for health care, namely safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient and fair [10]

Hospitals around the world are looking for methods to communicate with isolated patients so that patients and health workers are protected in addition to protecting health workers by using PPE efficiently and allowing patients to communicate virtually with their families when they are sick and alone. Given the current crisis, rapid deployment of communications solutions is urgently needed[20]. Some hospitals are already integrating telehealth into their workflows, but many are unsure how to do it appropriately. Telehealth solutions in hospitals can address care gaps. Longitudinal study to measure the value of this tool for patients and providers in facilitating communication and improving quality of care [15]

The Covid-19 crisis has taught us about the power of virtual care. At Cleveland Clinic virtual visits went from 10% to around 70% during the 2 months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Patient satisfaction reached its peak with more than 80% of patients providing top ratings, including recommending virtual visits. Social distance is not an obstacle for patients and health workers to communicate, even virtual visits make it easier to communicate, for example to schedule online appointments and see a doctor anytime, anywhere and on any device, it has become a necessity to realize centered care. in patients in this COVID-19 era. The results showed that positive experiences depended largely on communication with the patient, involvement of the patient and

family in the care team, and the feeling of being cared for by physicians, staff, and especially, nurses. At issue in care is a general lack of ease of use such as waiting for appointments, ineffective anticipatory guidance, lack of timely response, and lack of communication and empathy [10]

In these times of Covid-19, hospitals can work to rebuild trust by providing safety messages with videos, socially distanced furniture arrangements. In addition to the dangers of Covid-19, patients may still be less aware of safety risks and what they can do to help keep themselves safe. Patient safety commissions have repeatedly found that sentinel events are usually related to human factors, and the primary cause is communication failure. Therefore, in safety, it is necessary to assess communication practices such as doctor and nurse communication, as well as the implementation and sustainability of evidence-based communication practices such as reports when carrying out handoffs, aplus, and treatment visit plans [10]. Organizations that are committed to HR must have communication training internal and formal policies covering HR, including the use of patient decision aids when necessary (Légaré and Thompson-Leduc 2014).

Additionally, OpenNotes, Patient Reported Outcome Measures (PROM), and Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREM) all add value to an organization's efforts to invite and receive patient input to provide patient-centered care. However, interaction between doctors and patients should not be ignored, even during the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be done via a computer screen. Shared decision making has also made it into healthcare nomenclature as the gold standard in patient communication. What is most important to keeping patients safe is that patients have, and utilize, a method for speaking up. Research in this area shows that more engaged patients have better health outcomes and lower annual costs[10]

An absence of empathy also impacts burnout, complacency, engagement and the risk of poor practice. As a result, there are many communication models, and empathy training is a core component of orientation and ongoing training at Cleveland Clinic, which is founded on the REDE model. (The model applies effective communication skills to optimize personal connections in the three main phases of Relationships: Formation, Development, and Engagement). Healthcare workers who completed REDE to Communicate training compared with those who did not, validated scales of empathy, patient satisfaction, and emotional exhaustion due to burnout showed significant improvements [2]. All Covid-19 communication resources in this model cover bad news, advance care planning, and how to build relationships and empathy in a virtual platform Incorporating empathy into survey design and giving employees and staff time to attend training is critical.

## **E. Conclusion**

Effective communication during the COVID-19 pandemic is very important in health services, both between health workers and with patients. Effective communication emphasizes the importance of content, accuracy, comprehensive signs, symbols, language, culture and rules. The pandemic demands strengthening the relevance of effective communication. Effective communication is an important factor in providing safe patient care. Communication failures in health care can lead to serious medical errors that affect the quality of health care. It is mandatory to prepare for dynamic risk events and uncertainty management during the pandemic. To achieve

a comprehensive framework for effective and integrated communications for COVID-19, technology is essential. Success in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic also mandates effective communication and interpersonal skills from doctors and other health workers.

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