

SYNOPSIS

Introduction:

The process of exchanging ideas, thoughts, opinions, knowledge, and information so that the message is received and understood with clarity and purpose is known as effective communication. Both the provider and the receiver are satisfied when we communicate effectively. Communication can take many forms, including verbal and nonverbal communication, writing, visual communication, and listening. Communication should be clear, correct, complete, concise, and compassionate, regardless of the method used. Effective communication between healthcare providers and their patients or guardians can empower them to participate as full partners in their care. Research in this area shows that it improves adherence to treatment and self-management as well. Further, recent studies in this area show a link between effective communication and improved health outcomes, implying that healthcare delivery could be significantly improved.

Despite the importance of effective provider guardian's communication in healthcare sector in Sri Lanka, it has become one of the mostly neglected aspects in hospitals. The importance of provider-guardian communication extends far beyond the typical context. When considering the children's health care, any sick child has to be managed with the information provided by the parents or the guardians. Unlike adult patients, the children are unable to provide necessary information and give consent on their management. Given this background this project evaluated the existing level of provider guardian communication in ward 02 and outdoor pharmacy of Lady Ridgeway Hospital for Children (LRH) hospital in Sri Lanka. After identifying the communication gaps between guardians and different staff categories of the provider (Medical officers, Nursing officers, Dispensers, Pharmacists and Healthcare

assistants), an intervention package to improve provider guardian communication was introduced in the medical ward and outdoor pharmacy of LRH. Finally, the post-interventional assessment and evaluation were carried out to assess the effectiveness and sustainability of the package's implementation.

Objectives:

The objective of the study was to improve provider guardian communication in selected medical ward of Lady Ridge way Hospital for Children, Colombo through a communication package. It also conducted pre- and post-interventional evaluations and explains the effectiveness and sustainability of the communication packages implemented as part of this project.

Material and methods:

A research project was conducted that included various types of health staff from a medical ward and an outdoor pharmacy. The project was divided into three stages: In phase one, medical officers, nursing officers, dispensers, pharmacists, and health assistants' knowledge and attitudes were assessed with self-administered questionnaires. In addition to that non-participatory observations were conducted to evaluate the related practice of the same group of employees. Furthermore, the environment was evaluated for its suitability for communication. Using these methods communication gaps were identified, and an interventional communication package was designed and implemented. After two months of intervention, a post-intervention evaluation was carried out using the same study instruments. To assess the outcomes, two separate surveys (pre and post) were conducted covering 426 and 422 guardians respectively.

Results and Discussion:

The post-intervention assessment clearly demonstrated that there was a significance level of change in knowledge and attitude as a result of the intervention. Health Assistants had the greatest change in knowledge (34.83%), while dispensers and pharmacists had the least. In the study, the highest attitudinal change was observed in health assistants, while the lowest (8.96%) was observed in medical officers. The medical officers' group had the highest change of practice (15.67%), while the nursing officers' group had the lowest (13.57%). The overall communication experience of guardians with the health staff had increased by 26.09 %. Accordingly, environment has improved by 30% of the ward while environment of the pharmacy has increased by 49.90 %.

Conclusion:

The study was conducted to improve provider-guardian communication Of the selected units of LRH. During the pre-interventional phase, the existing level of communication was assessed using a variety of methods. According to previous studies, effective communication in healthcare provides, practical ways of enhancing communication between health professionals and patients. While confirming the findings of previous studies in this area, the results of this project revealed that a simple intervention method such as training health professionals and changing environment may contribute reasonably to change the quality of the provider guardian communication in LRH. It is also found that the changing healthcare environment has some positive impacts on improving the quality of the provider-guardian communication in the LRH.

Recommendations:

Effective communication is a vital and essential aspect of healthcare. It helps to make accurate diagnoses, provide appropriate treatments, and ensure that patients understand their health

status and needs. It is necessary to understand the current communication levels in each hospital in order to improve provider guardians' communications. Furthermore, it is critical to assess how communication occurs between administration and staff, between staff and staff, and between staff and patients or guardians. This includes asking health staff as well as guardians how they feel about the existing communication level and what changes they would like to see. After understanding the current level of communication, it is required to identify and pay special attention to areas where communication is successful and failing. Accordingly, an effective communication packages need to be designed and implemented in each hospital in the country. This will play a vital role in decision-making and problem solving in this sector. At the policy level, similar project designed in this study on provider guardian communication should be designed and implemented all over the country. The results of this study can be utilized as a base for future development of the communication in health sector in Sri Lanka.

Key words: Effective communication; provider-guardian; health sector; intervention