

Observation on the Effect of Nurse-Patient Communication in the Nursing Process of Elderly Diabetic Patients

Chen Li

The First People's Hospital of Aksu Prefecture, Aksu City, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region 843000

Abstract: This paper aims to comprehensively explore the effect of nurse-patient communication in the nursing process of elderly diabetic patients. It analyzes the characteristics and needs of elderly diabetic patients, elaborates on the significance, methods, and observed effects of nurse-patient communication, and discusses the challenges and corresponding countermeasures. Through this research, it is expected to provide valuable insights and references for improving the quality of nursing care for elderly diabetic patients and enhancing the effectiveness of communication.

Keywords: Nurse-patient communication; Elderly diabetic patients; Nursing effect; Glycemic control; Psychological state

1 Introduction

Diabetes is a prevalent chronic disease among the elderly population, and its management requires comprehensive and long-term care. Nurse-patient communication plays a crucial role in this process, as it directly affects the patient's treatment compliance, psychological well-being, and overall prognosis. This paper focuses on observing and analyzing the impact of nurse-patient communication in the nursing of elderly diabetic patients.

2 Characteristics and Needs of Elderly Diabetic Patients

2.1 Physical Characteristics

With age, elderly patients experience a reduction in various physiological functions. Their metabolism slows down, the immune system weakens, and organ functions decline. For diabetic patients, this leads to difficulties in glycemic control, such as slower insulin absorption and metabolism, which requires more precise adjustment of medication dosages and timing. Additionally, wound healing is delayed, and the risk of infections increases.

Elderly diabetic patients often have other comorbidities, including hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, and cerebrovascular diseases. These comorbidities not only complicate the treatment process but also increase the risk of adverse events. Nurses need to consider the interaction between different diseases and medications when providing care, making the nursing work more challenging.

2.2 Psychological Characteristics

The chronic nature of diabetes and the potential threat of complications cause elderly patients to experience fear and anxiety. They worry about the impact of the disease on their daily lives and future health, which can significantly affect their psychological state and treatment compliance. Some patients may become overly vigilant about their blood glucose levels, leading to excessive stress and anxiety.

Many elderly patients live alone or have limited social interactions. The diagnosis of diabetes may further exacerbate their feelings of loneliness and isolation. They desire emotional support and communication from medical staff and family members. A lack of social support can negatively impact their motivation and ability to manage the disease effectively.

2.3 Nursing Needs

Elderly diabetic patients need detailed and understandable health education about diabetes management. This includes knowledge about diet control, appropriate exercise, correct medication use, and self-monitoring of blood glucose. Given their potential difficulty in understanding complex medical concepts, nurses must use simple language and diverse teaching methods to ensure effective education.

Due to their psychological characteristics, these patients require emotional support to alleviate fear, anxiety, and loneliness. Nurses can play a crucial role by listening to their concerns, providing comfort and encouragement, and helping them develop a positive attitude towards the disease. Regular communication and care can enhance the patient's sense of being cared for and increase their confidence in disease management.

Because diabetes is a chronic condition, elderly patients need continuous care and regular follow-up. Nurses need to monitor their glycemic control closely, adjust the treatment plan as needed, and provide guidance on lifestyle modifications. Effective communication between nurses and patients is essential to ensure that patients understand the importance of long-term management and actively cooperate.

3 Significance of Nurse-Patient Communication in Elderly Diabetic Nursing

3.1 Building a Good Relationship

Effective communication allows nurses to establish a trusting and friendly relationship with elderly diabetic patients. When patients trust the nurses, they are more likely to actively cooperate with the treatment and nursing plans, such as adhering to the medication schedule, following the diet recommendations, and participating in regular medical check-ups. This cooperation is vital for achieving good glycemic control and improving the patient's overall health status.

Through communication, nurses can understand the patient's psychological state and provide appropriate psychological support. By listening to the patient's concerns and fears, nurses can offer reassurance and explanations, helping to reduce the patient's anxiety. A relaxed and trusting communication environment can improve the patient's treatment experience and enhance their confidence in dealing with the disease.

3.2 Improving Patient Compliance

In the nursing process, nurses need to provide clear and accurate instructions and guidance to patients regarding various aspects of diabetes management, such as diet, exercise, medication, and self-monitoring. Good communication ensures that patients understand these instructions correctly. For example, when explaining how to use a glucometer, the nurse can demonstrate the steps clearly and use simple language to describe the key points, enabling the patient to perform self-monitoring accurately and regularly.

Every elderly diabetic patient has unique circumstances and needs. Nurse-patient communication helps nurses understand these individual differences and provide personalized care and advice. For instance, for a patient with poor eyesight, the nurse can recommend a glucometer with a larger display or provide assistance in reading the results. By tailoring the communication and care plan to the patient's specific situation, nurses can significantly improve the patient's compliance and the effectiveness of treatment.

3.3 Facilitating Early Detection and Intervention

Regular communication with patients enables nurses to closely monitor their physical and mental conditions. By asking about the patient's symptoms, diet, exercise, and blood glucose changes, nurses can detect potential problems early. For example, if a patient reports increased thirst and frequent urination, it may indicate that the glycemic control is not optimal, and the nurse can promptly notify the doctor for further evaluation and adjustment of the treatment plan.

Nurses should encourage patients to actively provide feedback on their feelings and experiences during the treatment process. Through communication, patients may report some seemingly minor discomfort or problems that they have noticed but may not consider significant. However, these details can be crucial for early detection and intervention. For instance, a patient may mention a slight skin itch, which could be an early sign of a skin complication related to diabetes. By paying attention to such feedback and taking appropriate measures in a timely manner, nurses can prevent the problem from worsening and improve the patient's quality of life.

4 Methods of Nurse-Patient Communication in Elderly Diabetic Nursing

4.1 Verbal Communication

When communicating with elderly diabetic patients, nurses should use straightforward and easy-to-understand language. Avoid using medical jargon or complex terms that may confuse the patient. For example, instead of saying "hyperglycemia," it is better to say "high blood sugar." Speak slowly and clearly, and repeat important information if necessary to ensure that the patient understands. For instance, when explaining the diet plan, the nurse can say, "You need to eat more vegetables and whole grains, and reduce the intake of sweets and fatty foods. This will help control your blood sugar."

Nurses should actively listen to the patient's words, showing interest and attention through appropriate body language, such as maintaining eye contact, nodding, and smiling. Respond promptly and appropriately to the patient's questions and concerns, providing accurate and useful information. If a patient asks about the side effects of a medication, the nurse can listen carefully to the patient's concerns and then explain in detail the possible side effects and how to deal with them, such as, "Some people may experience a little nausea when taking this medicine at the beginning, but it usually subsides after a few days. If it persists or becomes severe, you should let us know immediately."

Create a relaxed and open communication environment to encourage patients to express their feelings, thoughts, and experiences freely. Let the patient know that their opinions and feelings are important and respected. For example, the nurse can say, "How do you feel about your diabetes management recently? Is there anything you would like to share with me?" This can help nurses better understand the patient's psychological state and needs, and provide more targeted care and support.

4.2 Non-verbal Communication

Use appropriate body language to convey warmth, care, and professionalism. A gentle touch on the patient's shoulder or hand can provide comfort and reassurance. Maintain a good posture and facial expression, showing friendliness and confidence. For example, when helping a patient with a blood glucose test, a smile and a reassuring look can make the patient feel more at ease. However, it is important to note that body language should be appropriate and respectful, taking into account the patient's cultural background and personal preferences. Some patients may be more sensitive to physical contact, so nurses need to be sensitive to these differences and adjust their behavior accordingly.

Utilize visual aids such as pictures, charts, and models to enhance communication effectiveness. For elderly patients who may have difficulty understanding abstract concepts, visual materials can make the information more 直观 and easier to understand. For example, use a food pyramid chart to explain the proportion of different types of foods in a healthy diet, or use a model of a syringe to show how to inject insulin correctly. Visual aids can also be used to illustrate the progress of the disease and the effect of treatment. For instance, showing a graph of the patient's blood glucose changes over time can help the patient understand the impact of their treatment and lifestyle modifications on glycemic control.

Provide written materials such as patient education brochures, discharge instructions, and medication schedules to supplement verbal communication. Written materials can serve as a reminder for patients and their families, especially for important information such as medication dosages and times, diet restrictions, and follow-up appointments. The content of written materials should be simple, clear, and in large print if possible to be easily read by elderly patients. For example, a brochure on diabetes self-management can include step-by-step instructions on diet control, exercise tips, and how to handle common emergencies such as hypoglycemia. The nurse can also encourage patients and their families to read and discuss the written materials together to ensure that they understand and can follow the instructions.

5 Conclusion

Develop individualized care plans based on a comprehensive understanding of each patient's situation, including their physical condition, psychological state, cultural background, and social support system. Tailor the communication and care strategies to meet the specific needs of each patient. For example, for a patient with a strong religious belief, the nurse can incorporate relevant religious elements into the care plan.

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