

Integrated Literature Review of Communication Methods of Patients With Dementia

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This study reviewed systematic and meta-analysis research on the methods of communication in patients with dementia. This study aimed to identify the interventions that can improve communication between these patients and the health care professionals who care for them. The results showed that communication training programs have been developed for healthcare professionals and paraprofessionals to help them learn how to engage with patients with dementia through various communication strategies. For example, patient-centered communication strategies focus on target behaviors, encourage life-story telling, encourage activities that promote empathy toward patients' illness, and introduce ways of engagement that can overcome the obstacle of patients' being understood and helps them accept their condition and who they are. Additionally, through these communication training programs, healthcare professionals can change their own characteristics, values, beliefs, attitudes, and skills for communicating with patients with dementia. Thus, they are more likely to listen to their patients' subjective experiences and feelings and are able to develop the skills to help patients cope with difficult issues in their daily lives. The authors recommend that healthcare professionals should record their communication with patients with dementia on audio tape or video. Subsequently, qualitative studies of the recorded data should be conducted to identify the verbal and nonverbal language used. Dementia experts can then analyze these qualitative study results and encourage healthcare professionals to reflect on the clinical process of communication. In turn, healthcare professionals can modify their ways of engagement, behaviors, and thoughts toward dementia care. In the long run, communication training programs will enable the communication gap between healthcare professionals and patients with dementia to become smaller. Consequently, they might understand each other more effectively. This more effective understanding might reduce the behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia of patients with dementia and improve their quality of life. The authors recommend that healthcare professionals should communicate with patients with dementia by using the communication strategies identified through the literature review, such as applying the VIPS model of valuing, individualized, perspective, socialized process into dementia care; developing the communication principles of being patient-centered and focused on target behaviors, life-story telling, encouraging activities that promote empathy toward patients' illness; and using the skills of listening, empathy, touching, and visualized materials to gain insight into the inner world of patients with dementia. Then, healthcare professionals can identify patients' real needs and demands while referring to a background rationale. Additionally, the authors recommend that healthcare professionals should record their communication with patients with dementia on audio tape or video. Subsequently, qualitative studies of the recorded data should be conducted to identify the verbal and nonverbal language used. Dementia experts can then analyze the qualitative study results and encourage healthcare professionals to reflect on the clinical process of communication. In turn, healthcare professionals can modify their ways of engagement, behaviors, and thoughts toward dementia care.

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## References:

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## Abstract Summary:

This study reviewed systematic and meta-analysis research on the methods of communication in patients with dementia. This study aimed to identify the interventions that can improve communication between these patients and the health care professionals who care for them.

## Content Outline:

- a) Communication training programs have been developed for healthcare professionals and paraprofessionals to help them learn how to engage with patients with dementia through various communication strategies.
- b) Through these communication training programs, healthcare professionals can change their own characteristics, values, beliefs, attitudes, and skills for communicating with patients with dementia.
- c) Patient-centered communication strategies focused on target behaviors, encourage life-story telling, encourage activities could promote empathy toward patients' illness, and introduce ways of engagement that can overcome the obstacle of patients' being understood and helps them accept their condition and who they are.

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