

Neuropsychopedagogic awareness of nursing professionals in care for customer with hearing impairment

Conscientização neuropsicopedagógica de profissionais de enfermagem no atendimento ao cliente com deficiência auditiva
Concienciación neuropsicopedagógica de profesionales de enfermería en el cuidado del cliente con déficit auditivo

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo teve por objetivo avaliar a percepção de profissionais de enfermagem sobre a importância da linguagem em Libras como potencial facilitador aos cuidados de enfermagem voltada ao deficiente auditivo. Método: Participaram da pesquisa 26 profissionais de enfermagem, com idade compreendida entre 29 a 66 anos. Os participantes foram submetidos a um questionário contendo treze itens, que buscam avaliar o seu grau de conhecimento em relação ao atendimento ao cliente surdo. Resultados: Nossos resultados mostram que a maioria dos entrevistados não trabalha ou nunca trabalhou no atendimento ao paciente com deficiência auditiva e considera de fundamental importância o profissional de enfermagem aprender técnicas de comunicação visando reconhecer o estado emocional destes pacientes. Conclusão: Portanto pode-se concluir sobre a existência de um possível despreparo dos profissionais participantes do presente estudo em relação as habilidades comportamentais e comunicativas frente ao atendimento da enfermagem ao cliente com deficiência auditiva.

DESCRIPTORES: Enfermagem; Comunicação; Surdez; Libras.

ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to evaluate the perception of nursing professionals about the importance of Language in Libras as a potential facilitator of nursing care aimed at the hearing impaired. Method: 26 nursing professionals participated in the research, aged between 29 and 66 years. Participants were submitted to a questionnaire containing thirteen items, which seek to assess their level of knowledge in relation to service to deaf clients. Results: Our results show that most of the interviewees do not work or have never worked in the care of patients with hearing loss and consider it of fundamental importance for the nursing professional to learn communication techniques in order to recognize the emotional state of these patients. Conclusion: Conclude on the existence of a possible unpreparedness of the professionals participating in the present study in relation to behavioral and communicative skills in relation to nursing care for clients with hearing loss.

DESCRIPTORS: Nursing; Communication; Deafness; Pounds.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: Este estudio tuvo como objetivo evaluar la percepción de los profesionales de enfermería acerca de la importancia del lenguaje en Libras como un potencial facilitador de la atención de enfermería para los hipoacúsicos. Método: Participaron de la investigación 26 profesionales de enfermería, con edades entre 29 y 66 años. Los participantes fueron sometidos a un cuestionario que contiene trece ítems, que buscan evaluar su nivel de conocimiento en relación con la atención al cliente sordo. Resultados: Nuestros resultados muestran que la mayoría de los entrevistados no trabajan o nunca han trabajado en el cuidado de pacientes con deficiencia auditiva y consideran de fundamental importancia que el profesional de enfermería aprenda técnicas de comunicación para reconocer el estado emocional de estos pacientes. Conclusión: Por lo tanto, se puede concluir sobre la existencia de una posible falta de preparación de los profesionales que participan en este estudio en relación con las habilidades conductuales y comunicativas en relación con la atención de enfermería a los clientes con discapacidad auditiva.

DESCRIPTORES: Enfermería; Comunicación; Sordera; Libras.

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INTRODUCTION

In the field of health, good communication makes it possible to identify, understand and meet the needs of users of health services in a comprehensive and humane way.¹ As a result, it should be considered an indispensable instrument both for obtaining a diagnosis and developing a preventive or therapeutic plan, since the exchange of verbal information occurs in several procedures.²

Communication usually occurs through oral language, but when health professionals receive the client, it is essential to establish a communication channel that is understood by both parties. In the case of assistance to the hearing impaired (HI), Brazilian Sign Language (LIBRAS - Língua brasileira de sinais) is an alternative language to establish dialogue, as it is legally recognized as the official means of communication for Brazilian deaf people.³

However, even in the face of efforts aimed at establishing the use of Language in LIBRAS according to legal parameters, especially in the health field, communication with these people occurs in a negligent way, including nursing, since the assistance of this professional occurs mainly through dialogue with the patient.²

Hearing impairment is among the most prevalent disabilities in Brazil according to statistical surveys from the 2010 Demographic Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), where he reported that 45.6 million (23.9%) people have at least one of the disabilities screened, with hearing impairment declared by 9.7 million (5.1%) Brazilians, representing the second most common disability in the country.⁴

This large number of people with hearing impairment draws attention to the need for health institutions to develop strategies and programs that enable communication between nurses and patients.⁵ The structural deficiency of health systems triggers a compromise in communication between the parties involved, which directly affects the quality of care provided.⁶

Faced with this failure in interlocution, patients are unable to convey what they are really feeling, leaving them scared, anxious and insecure. Studies point to the dissatisfaction of the hearing impaired in relation to the assistance offered to this public, who feel discriminated against by the way in which they are assisted.⁷

The problem involving health care for clients with hearing loss is a result of the lack of knowledge of health pro-

fessionals regarding the use of LIBRAS Language and the lack of preparation of the team to care for these patients. This communication barrier impairs or even prevents these patients from accessing health services.⁸

Due to this failure in the training of professionals, the service offered is precarious, directly affecting the quality of health care.⁹ Currently, the use of LIBRAS is still little used by health professionals and, sometimes, understanding is compromised, which emphasizes the need for learning LIBRAS to improve communication in the health care routine of the units.¹⁰

In some cases, it is believed that the performance of an interpreter in LIBRAS would be feasible to solve the problem of communication between the professional and the deaf user. However, its presence does not effectively contribute to the inclusion of the hearing impaired.¹¹ According to Casali¹², although the figure of the interpreter helps to develop good communication, his presence may not be positive as it makes it difficult for the client to expose intimate situations.

In view of this, the use of Language in LIBRAS by health professionals is the best way to establish a bond through communication in order to understand the being in its most diverse

peculiarities and offering access to the health that it is entitled to.¹³

According to the Nursing Professional Code of Ethics (CEPE), nurses have the right to improve their technical, scientific and cultural knowledge, in addition to supporting professional improvement practices. The same code states that it is the nurse's duty to offer assistance free of prejudice of any kind.¹⁴ Nurses have the right and duty to improve their knowledge in the use of LIBRAS to offer inclusive and quality care.⁹

Hearing impaired people have the right to be treated as citizens and have the need for health professionals to respect their condition without discriminating against them.⁷ Nursing professionals must constantly acquire knowledge to humanize care. The nurse is a transforming agent, able to improve their attitudes with everyday experiences, with this it is possible to say that the current nurse is not the same as tomorrow.¹⁵

The nurse of the future must identify and resolve their professional shortcomings, seeking to train themselves to positively influence their workplace. The new professional must have a holistic view based on valuing the bond between professional and patient, in order to provide comprehensive care, aiming at the individual's biopsychosocial well-being.¹³

Based on what was previously mentioned, this study aimed to evaluate the perception of nursing professionals about the importance of using LIBRAS Language as a potential facilitator of nursing care for the hearing impaired.

METHOD

A retrospective cross-sectional study was used with data surveys involving nursing professionals working in two public hospitals in the city of Campos dos Goytacazes/RJ. The choice of locations is justified because they are health units that together have a sig-

nificant number of professionals and a high demand for health services, which exposes professionals to different experiences, thus constituting a satisfactory sample capable of guaranteeing the veracity of the research.¹⁶

Nurses and nursing technicians of both sexes who work for at least six months in each health unit and who voluntarily agree to participate in the study were included in the research.

Data collection took place in October and November 2017, using a questionnaire containing thirteen items, nine of which were evaluated in relation to agreement on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = "I completely agree"; 2 = "agree"; 3 = "I have no opinion"; 4 = "disagree"; 5 = "strongly disagree". The questions seek to identify the interviewee and assess their level of knowledge in relation to deaf customer service. The use of the Likert scale provides practicality to the researcher by allowing the measurement of people's agreement in relation to certain questions related to a construct of interests.¹⁷

Considering that this research was carried out by studying human beings in their social context, this work was developed in accordance with the norms provided for in Resolution

466/2012 CNS-CONEP. In this way, respect for dignity, confidentiality of information, anonymity of the people involved were guaranteed, ensuring the rights and duties of the participants, without violating the fundamental ethical aspects for carrying out this work. Therefore, the procedures adopted in the present study were approved by the CEP of Faculdade São Fidélis under opinion 2,218,013.

RESULTS

26 nursing professionals participated in the research, 05 males and 21 females. The studied population ranges in age from 29 to 66 years and professional experience from 06 to 41 years.

As for academic training, 13 have higher education (12 in nursing and 01 in social work), the others have training in the medium/technical modality. Regarding occupation at the time of the survey, 08 are nurses and 18 are nursing technicians, although 05 of these are also graduates in the area. As for specialization, 12 professionals have some post-graduation distributed in: ICU, Obstetrics, Collective Health, Urgency and Emergency; Occupational Health, Hospital Management and Oncology.

Table 01 – Distribution of responses from study participants on the role of nurses with hearing impaired, 2017.

Questions	Totally agree	Agree	I have no opinion	Disagree	Completely Disagree
I have worked with patients who have Hearing Impairment	03	07	01	12	03
I work with patients with Hearing Impairment	01	03	01	19	02
I know the communicative characteristics of patients with Hearing Impairment	01	07	01	17	0
I know the behavioral characteristics of patients with Hearing Impairment	01	07	02	13	03
I feel prepared to assist patients with Hearing Impairment	0	04	02	17	03

From data analysis it was possible to organize the research into categories for better understanding. The first category deals with the experience of nursing professionals in caring for clients with hearing loss and their communicational relationship with them, as can be seen in Table 01.

The analysis indicates that more than half of the interviewees do not work or have never worked in the care of patients with hearing impairment. The lack of preparation of health professionals in caring for the hearing impaired is a reality that can be explained mainly by the lack of disciplines that favor inclusion in care, as in the case of HI, LIBRAS is the appropriate means of communication to establish dialogue between professionals and patients. In this regard, it can be proven with the answers of the interviewees that in fact the academic training is flawed, since 16 and 10 respectively answered disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the statement that they were prepared to care for the deaf during the course.

The problem of communication is sociocultural and to assist deaf patients, it is essential that their language and culture be understood. Thus, the training of health professionals is essential for them to understand and respect the reality of the deaf and know how to meet their needs. Following this line of thought, it was evaluated based on the opinion of the interviewees about which professional in the hospital setting should be responsible for establishing communication with the deaf patient. The speech therapist and the nurse, in this order, were the most mentioned, as can be seen in Graph 01.

Given this, the incorporation of knowledge by nursing is essential, so that they know how to recognize the needs of clients, and use different means of communication to offer quality care.

Given the importance of training, we evaluated which barriers could be

I find it difficult to identify the needs of my patients with Hearing Impairment	04	09	02	10	01
There is a need for a specific professional in the hospital to mediate the nurse-patient relationship where there are patients with Hearing Impairment	07	11	03	03	02
The family acts actively in the process of welcoming patients with hearing impairment	04	11	08	02	01
My academic background prepared me to deal with individuals who have a hearing impairment	0	0	0	16	10

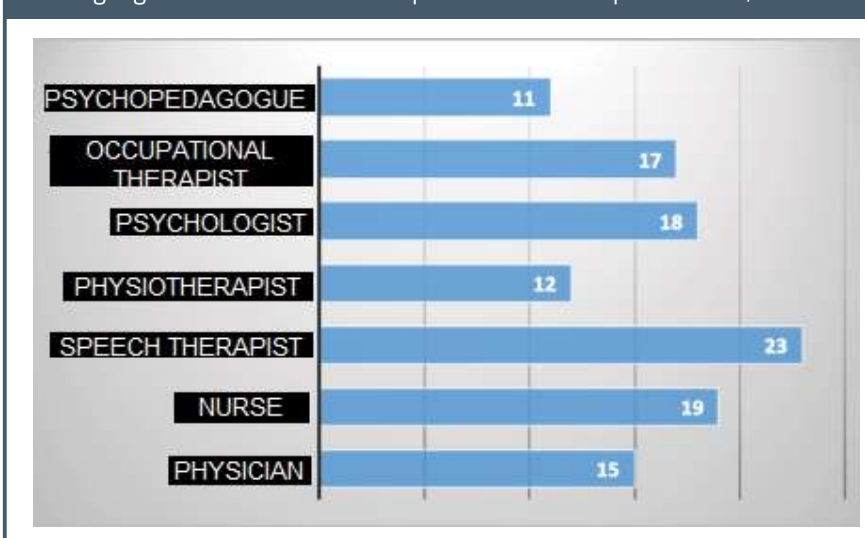
Source: Survey data, 2017

Table 02 – Distribution of responses from study participants regarding the relevance of communication between nurse and patient in hospital care, 2017.

Questions	It's very relevant	It's relevant	I have no opinion	It's irrelevant	It's very irrelevant
In your opinion, how relevant are the patient's abilities to understand and express emotional states for their reception process during hospital care?	18	06	02	0	0
In your opinion, how relevant are nurses' skills in identifying their patients' emotional states during hospital care?	17	03	03	03	0

Source: Survey data, 2017

Graph 01 – Distribution in relation to the professional who should promote the language and communication of patients in the hospital context, 2017.



preventing these professionals from taking a course in LIBRAS and the means of communication to improve care for the deaf. Table 03 illustrates the respondents' responses to this question.

DISCUSSION

When asked about the knowledge of the patients' communicative and behavioral characteristics, the incidence of responses was negative. In addition, given the statement that they are prepared to serve the deaf client,¹⁷ and 03 respectively disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. The data are worrisome, as communicative skills are essential tools in the field of health, as nursing activities mainly involve communication, regardless of academic training.⁸ Only through a communicational bond with the patient is he able to understand him as a holistic being, to then reach an understanding of his needs and offer quality care.¹⁸

Educational institutions should offer students knowledge of Brazilian Sign Language, understanding of the culture of the deaf and teaching about health care for the deaf in a way that understands and meets their needs.⁸ The importance of continuing education is highlighted for updating and improving communicative skills to offer better service.⁵

Seeking to ensure the rights of the hearing impaired in health services, Law No. 10,436 which provides for Brazilian sign language, brings in its third article the responsibility of public institutions and public health service concessionaires to offer quality care to the hearing impaired. 19 Decree No. 5626, of December 22, 2005 reinforces that qualified professionals are needed in health institutions to provide care to the deaf, and also requires that about 5% of health professionals in the unit must be qualified to use LIBRAS. Faced with these requirements, the question arises regarding the incor-

Questions	Answers
I have no interest, as it is not up to me.	01
I have no interest, as I do not verify this need.	02
I would like to do it, but I don't know how to.	10
I've tried it, but found it difficult to execute.	03
I've already done it, but I didn't find any significant result.	0
I hadn't thought about that and will look for more information on the subject.	10

Source: Survey data, 2017

poration of interpreters in LIBRAS in health care services, seeking to make care more inclusive.

When inquiring about the need for a specific professional to interpret and assist in the nurse's communication with the patient, the answers are positive for more than 50% of the interviewees. However, although the LIBRAS specialist facilitates assistance in case the health professional is not prepared, a third person may not be as beneficial in the case of a medical or nursing consultation. The presence of an interpreter may cause embarrassment for the client.²⁰ When inquiring about the need for a specific professional to interpret and assist in the nurse's communication with the patient, the answers are positive for more than 50% of the interviewees. However, although the LIBRAS specialist facilitates assistance in case the health professional is not prepared, a third person may not be as beneficial in the case of a medical or nursing consultation. The presence of an interpreter may cause embarrassment for the client.⁵

Another important point researched was the role of the family as a facilitator of communication. Most professionals agree that family participation is frequent and some reported having no opinion on the fact. Although usually those who help the relationship between deaf and hearing people are family members. Even so, it may not be as effective, because al-

though they master the language, only the interpreter is qualified to mediate the conversation without interfering in the communication process.²¹ A family member mediating the consultation can also interfere with patients reporting what they are really feeling to health professionals, in addition to infringing the right to privacy.²² Another unfavorable point is the possibility of family members changing the content expressed by the patient, whether intentional or accidental.

The nurse's skills in the search for a better interaction with the deaf patient cannot be ignored. It is essential for the nursing consultation that the professional develops strategies to reach understanding and establish a viable communication channel. For this, the use of specific communicative techniques is indispensable.²³

Nurses must be familiar with these techniques to offer better care to their patients. Lip reading can be one of these, as hearing impaired people generally use this skill. In this perspective, the professional must be skilled in using this means of communication, seeking to facilitate the understanding of information through clarity and lightness when speaking; It is also of great importance to promote a bright and peaceful location to the client in order to encourage dialogue.⁵ The use of writing in some cases can also be a tool to facilitate understanding between the parties, but in relation to deaf

clients it may not be as effective, given that these people mostly have a low level of education.⁶

The speech therapist has a great participation in the health process of the hearing impaired. Its importance can be contemplated, for example, in the linguistic development when the child is born with hearing loss.²⁴ The speech therapist also acts when deafness appears in adulthood and has other focuses that include better communication and even therapy for those who choose to use a hearing aid.²⁵

However, with regard to work in a hospital environment, the inclusive work of the nursing professional is of great importance, as this is the one who usually receives the patient and who has the most contact with him during the hospitalization period. And there is no adequate nursing care if there is interference in communication, since it is only through this that it is possible to establish a bond of trust with the client and be able to extract the maximum amount of information for the nursing history. Reaffirming communication as an indispensable tool for health professionals.⁶

It is necessary to reverse this commu-

nication problem in the hospital environment. The indignation of the deaf population towards health care in institutions is quite reported in studies, where they question the difficulty of communication and precarious service. This situation arouses feelings of neglect and rejection in patients.⁵

As can be seen, most report not knowing how to carry out the training or had not thought about the subject. LIBRAS is mandatory in pedagogy, undergraduate and graduate courses in speech therapy; and optional for other higher education courses in accordance with Decree No. 5626/05.

The fact that it is optional in some cases in the undergraduate nursing course suggests that it ends up not arousing the students' interest and this may be one of the reasons why some professionals have not thought about the importance of sign language for their service. With this, it is necessary to emphasize the renewal of pedagogical projects for the health area, including Libras as a mandatory subject and the dissemination of this language for the training of professionals.²⁶

CONCLUSION

From the results of the research, it is evident the lack of knowledge of behavioral and communicative skills in the face of customer service with hearing impairment. And with that, most professionals have difficulties in caring for patients and feel unprepared to provide health care.

It is noted that the problem in question is the failure of education systems in relation to LIBRAS as a discipline. According to all research subjects, none of them was prepared to assist the deaf person. Since nursing is a profession that is continuously with the patient, it is necessary that the nursing team is willing to understand them and identify their emotional states and complaints.

Given this, it reinforces the importance of institutional policies for training health professionals to better provide quality care and rights for all users of health services in an inclusive and welcoming manner. In addition, it is clear the need to integrate Libras as a mandatory subject in the undergraduate nursing course.

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