

SUPPORTING CHRONIC ILLNESS SELF-MANAGEMENT AND PATIENT-PARTNERSHIP: REALITIES FROM THE EASTERN CONTEXT

Ambreen Tharani (1), Ann Van Hecke (1,2), Tazeen Saeed Ali (3), Veerle Duprez (2)

1. University Centre for Nursing and Midwifery, Ghent University, Belgium; 2. Nursing Department, Ghent University Hospital, Belgium; 3. School of Nursing and Midwifery, Aga Khan University,

Background

The growing burden of chronic illness poses challenges for patients and healthcare professionals (HCPs), particularly in some Asian countries, which have limited resources and imbalances in decision-making authority among patients, their families, and the HCPs. Supporting the self-management (SM) of patients living with chronic illness is crucial in such a situation to improve their life quality. Patients sometimes do not express an explicit desire to participate in their illness management plan. Partnering with patients is crucial for achieving patient-centred care to enhance their autonomy and foster their health and well-being. Nurses, as the most available and affordable care professionals, can perform a critical role in supporting patients' SM during their illness trajectory. Different challenges exist in establishing patient-partnership and promoting nurses' supportive roles [1]. However, these realities are unclear and less explored, particularly from the Asian context.

Aim(s)

This study aimed:

1. to explore the perspectives of patients living with a chronic illness about self-management and their role as chronic care partners from the Asian context
2. to understand the perspectives of healthcare professionals on nurses' role in supporting the self-management of patients living with chronic illness in the Asian context.

Methods

An explorative-descriptive qualitative study was conducted in three teaching hospitals in Pakistan, a South Asian country. A self-developed semi-structured interview guide was used. We interviewed 15 patients to obtain their perspectives. Correspondingly, the healthcare professionals' data was collected from 16 key informant interviews (with consultants, and those nurses and consultants having an administrative role in chronic care management) and through seven focus group discussions (with nurses and nurse educators). Total professional participants were n=54. Purposive and theoretical sampling was used. The constant comparative method was utilized to identify core categories from the data and establish connections between emerging concepts.

Results

A differing perspective on self-management, patient partnership, and nurses' supportive role within was evident from the data. Patients' SM appeared as a complex and situation-driven process [2]. The patient's role as a partner is acknowledged; however, both families and expert professionals share decision-making in chronic care management. The closely interdependent factors and inner drives gleaned from patients' perspectives play a significant role in the acquisition of diverse self-management roles. Nurses were regarded as reliable healthcare professionals in supporting chronic illness SM. However, the nurses' perspectives reflect a fragile motivation to support patients' SM, which was greatly dependent on external factors.

Discussion

The learnings from Eastern perspectives realize glitches and potential implications to enhance patients-as-partner of care in chronic illness. The Asian countries experience a distinct interdependent community structure, creating an imbalance in decision-making authority among patients, their families, and the HCPs in chronic illness management [2]. Each patient adopted dynamic SM roles based on the situation, reflecting their efforts to harmonize relationships with themselves and significant others. The narrow perspective of professionals regarding SM created a feeling of being stretched among nurses as they experienced a discrepancy between the expected versus documented role. The clarity on what is needed in chronic care self-

management and the uncertain position of nurses in the Asian context requires a careful adaptation of well-developed practices and learning from the Western context [3] [4].

Implications and future perspectives

The lessons from existing approaches and strategies to partner with patients in the management of their chronic illness can be adapted between the Eastern and Western contexts. Furthermore, these strategies can promote the establishment of a productive and mutually interactive relationship between the HCPs, particularly nurses, and activated patients, as needed in the Asian context. The conceptual figures proposed from this study can serve as a foundation to devise measures to promote collaborative partnership with patients [2] and enhance motivation among nurses to perform a supportive role [3].

References

1. Tharani, et al, 120, 2021.
2. Tharani et al, 2023.
3. Duprez et al, 65: 2022
4. Duprez et al, 110, 2020