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# The effect of the communication skills training on the sensitivity and cultural competence of the nurses in the pediatric wards: A quasi-experimental study

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## Abstract:

**BACKGROUND:** This study aimed to investigate the effect of the communicative training skills on the sensitivity and cultural competence of the nurses in the pediatric wards.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS:** The participants included 54 nurses from the pediatric ward of Namazi Hospital affiliated with REDACTED. The sample members entered the study through voluntary registration in the in-service training system.

**RESULTS:** The results showed that cultural sensitivity score was  $44.22 \pm 11.78$  before the intervention,  $48.51 \pm 13.34$  immediately after the intervention, and  $55.55 \pm 20.20$  one month after the intervention. Cultural sensitivity score significantly increased immediately and one month after communication skills training for nurses compared to before the intervention ( $P < 0.001$ ). The results also showed that cultural competency score was  $51.68 \pm 9.43$  before the intervention and increased significantly immediately after the communication skills training and one month after the intervention ( $57.64 \pm 10.43$  and  $62.56 \pm 11.53$ , respectively), showing significant improvement ( $P < 0.001$ ).

**CONCLUSION:** The communication skills training promoted the nurses' cultural sensitivity and competence in childcare wards. Therefore, the implementation of the theoretical and practical methods of teaching communication skills is suggested to improve nurses' cultural competence and consequently, improve childcare quality in different cultures.

## Keywords:

Communication skills, cultural competence, cultural sensitivity, education, pediatric nurses

## Introduction

Today, children are hospitalized for various reasons compared to the past two decades. Despite the growing trend of the short days of hospitalization and outpatient surgeries, many hospitalized children have more serious and complicated problems than in the past.<sup>[1]</sup> Child hospitalization can cause a lot of stress, first for the child and then for their parents.<sup>[2]</sup> This can lead to insomnia, uncertainty, anxiety, and feelings

of helplessness in children, which in turn causes children not to cooperate and their negative emotions to increase.<sup>[3]</sup>

By using communication skills, nurses can significantly reduce the bitter experiences caused by the child's hospitalization.<sup>[4]</sup> Communication skills result in better health outcomes, including higher satisfaction, improved disease progression, increased self-confidence, increased respect for self and others, and reduced anxiety.<sup>[5]</sup>

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**Table 4: Determining and comparing the cultural competence of the pediatric ward nurses before, immediately after, and one month after the communication skills training**

|                     | Mean±Standard deviation |                                    |                                | P*     |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
|                     | Before the intervention | Immediately after the intervention | A month after the intervention |        |
| Cultural competency | 51.68±9.43              | 57.64±10.43                        | 62.56±11.53                    | <0.001 |

\*Friedman test

The use of different collection tools and questionnaires can also cause other inconsistencies in the results. The questionnaire used to assess Lee's cultural competence was different from that of the present study.

Based on the findings, training communication skills can affect cultural sensitivity and competence in the pediatric ward nurses. Therefore, the findings of this study can provide reliable information for managers to provide comprehensive care plans; attract researchers; provide a good foundation; guide for future research; plan and perform suitable care programs with clear sight, enough knowledge, and cognition; and value different cultures. The findings of this study can be used by all nurses, especially the pediatric ward nurses, to resolve problems arising from family/nurse cultural interaction in caring for sick children and reduce discrimination and cultural bias.

### Limitations and recommendation

The most important limitation of this study was the small sample size, and it was done only in one educational and medical center. It is suggested that studies should be performed in several educational centers and hospitals with a larger number of nurses and in more diverse wards. Another limitation was the lack of long-term follow-up after the intervention since only one posttest was considered due to the sample's attrition.

The present study results showed the positive effect of the communication skills training on the sensitivity and cultural competence of the nurses in the pediatric wards. Cultural sensitivity and competence are the two important components among the medical staff and nurses. Awareness of the patients' cultural needs is an essential part of the nurses' communication skills that can improve the performance of nurses in improving the quality of care for hospitalized children with different cultural backgrounds; therefore, the proposed communication skills training is suggested as a factor to improve the sensitivity and cultural competence of pediatric nurses.

### Conclusion

The results of this study showed that the communication skills education has a positive effect on cultural sensitivity as well as cultural competence of pediatric nurses and has promoted them. Therefore, the implementation of the theoretical and practical teaching methods of communication skills is suggested as a way to improve

the cultural competence and cultural sensitivity of nurses.

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### Author contributions

Azin Zeidani and Mitra Soltanian were involved in concept, design, definition of intellectual content, literature search, clinical studies, experimental studies, data acquisition, data analysis, statistical analysis, manuscript preparation, manuscript editing, and manuscript review.

Elham Mirshah and Mitra Edraki helped in clinical studies, experimental studies, data acquisition, and data analysis.

Mitra Soltanian is the guarantor responsible for the integrity of the work.

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### Conflict of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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