

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

# The Concept of Communication Skills in Medicine

DR-MAHA M ALMOHIZEA

# OBJECTIVES

- **At the end of today's session students should be able to;**

- Define communication, its theory and types.
- Discuss importance of communication in medicine.
- Demonstrate effective communication in day to day practice.
- Overcome barriers to effective communication.

# What is Communication?

- The act by which information is shared.
- It is the process by which we relate and interact with other people.
- It includes listening & understanding with passion & respect as well as expressing views & ideas and passing information to others in a clear manner.

# COMMUNICATION THEORY

- Communication is a learned skill based on 3 pillars:

- Accuracy

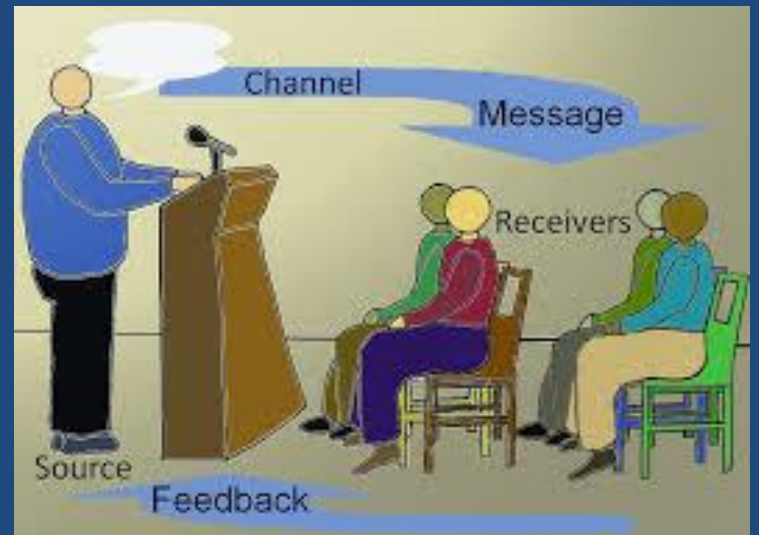
- Efficiency

- Supportiveness

**All of the above combine to contribute to effectiveness of communication**

# Non-Verbal

# Verbal



## **Verbal** (mainly focuses on questioning)

- **Open** (broad) – gives control to respondent, allows disclosure.
- **Open** (focused) – gives control to respondent within a given area, encourages disclosure of feelings.
- **Closed** – control is with interviewer, checks information.
- **Leading** – control with interviewer, suggests desired response.

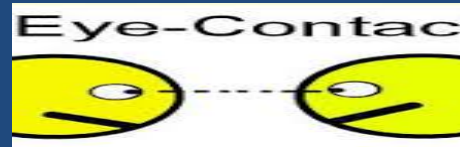
# Verbal Communication

- Speaking to the person
  - ✓ **Look straight in the eye**
  - ✓ **make eye contact**
  - ✓ **Show respect**
- Clear message
  - ✓ **Relevant**
  - ✓ **Use understandable language**
  - ✓ **Support by illustrations if needed**
- Good listener
  - ✓ **Allow others to understand the message and reply**
  - ✓ **Listen carefully**
  - ✓ **Make a dialogue and not one way instruction**



# NON VERBAL

- Listening (active and passive)
- Silence
- Touch
- Hand gestures
- Eye contact
- Posture
- Facial expression



# Communication: Why?

**Effective** communication is the basis of mutual understanding & trust.

**Poor** communication causes a lot of misunderstanding & hinders work & productivity.

# Communication: Why? Cont.

- To develop relationships
- To increase our knowledge
- To make our feelings and thoughts known
- To find out about people
- To find out information

# Communication & Medicine

- **Historically** the emphasis was on the biomedical model in medical training which places more value on technical proficiency than on communication skills.
- **Recently** learning communication skills & evidence based practice become the corner stones of modern medicine.

# Communication in medicine

- Increases patient satisfaction and health outcomes (Barlett, Grayson et al., 1984)
- Reduces the risk of complaint and litigation (Beckmam 1994)
- Higher levels of job satisfaction (Kramer et al., Suchman et al., 1993)

# From the doctors What is required

## *Towards the patients*

- Listen to patients and respond to their concerns and preferences.
- Give patients information in way they can understand
- Taking patient's views into consideration when assessing their condition
- Respond to patients questions , keep them informed & share information .

# From the doctors What is required (cont: )

## *Towards your patients*

- You must make sure, wherever practical, that arrangements are made to meet patient's language and communication needs.
- You must be considerate to relatives, carers and partners in providing information and support

# From the doctors What is required (cont: )

## *Towards your colleagues*

- Communicate effectively with colleagues within and outside the team
- Make sure your colleagues understand your role and responsibilities in the team and who is responsible for each aspect of patient care
- You must treat your colleagues fairly and with respect



# Why do the doctors need to practice good communication?

- Doctors need to learn essentials of good communication more than other professionals because patients are humans with sensitive needs.
- Doctors cannot practice medicine without effective communication skills.
- Poor communication causes a lot of medico-legal and ethical problems.

# Communication: With whom?

- Patients & care-givers
- Nurses & auxiliary staff
- Colleagues
- Administrators
- Reporting research findings
- Talking to the media
- Public & legislature

# Where to apply our Communication skills ?

- The medical interview is the usual communication encounter between the doctor and the patient
- It can be classified according to the purpose of the interview into 4 types:

**1. History taking**

**2. Consultations**

**3. Obtaining informed  
Consent**

**4. Breaking bad news**

# Effective communication

- Ensures good working relationship
- Increases patients satisfaction
- Increases patients understanding of illness & management
- Improves patients compliance with treatment
- Reduce medico-legal problems
- Reduce uncertainty

# Principles of effective communication

- Planning
- Interaction rather than a direct transmission
- Flexibility in relation to different individuals and contexts.
- Ability to handle emotional outbreaks

# Communication with peers

**Mutual trust & respect**

**Exchange information**

**Ask your seniors**

# Communication & Medical care

- Good communication should be established between the patient , the family and the treating multidisciplinary team.
- Patient & family should be encouraged to participate and verbalize in the ward round discussion about:
  - ✓ Offered medical care & treatment
  - ✓ Rehabilitation
  - ✓ Follow- up/re-admission plans
  - ✓ Doubts & worries.
  - ✓ **Proper information to patient and family regarding services available and how they can utilize them.**

# Communication skills: Some techniques

- **PRACTICE**- fluent dialogue with patient
- **USE**- silence effectively, allowing patient enough time to express thoughts or feelings
- **ENCOURAGE**- patients with your supportive words
- **UTILIZE** - non-verbal communication



# Listening vs Hearing

- **Hearing** - a passive activity; no effort
- **Listening**
  - ✓ Attention
  - ✓ Active involvement,
  - ✓ Full understanding
  - ✓ Takes time and effort

# Barriers to effective communication

- Personal attitudes
- Ignorance
- Human failings (tiredness, stress)
- Language
- Poor time management
- Strenuous working environment

# Conclusion

- Effective communication is the ***key to success in professional career.***
- Good communication is essential for proper doctor-patient relationship and ***help avoids problems of misunderstanding.***

## Further reading

- Faulkner, A (2001) Effective Interact Interaction with Patients, 2nd Ed. Churchill Livingstone, London

# THANK YOU VERY MUCH

