

NURSING CARE FOR THE COMFORT OF HOSPITALIZED PATIENTS

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Abstract:

Ensuring the comfort of hospitalized patients is a key aspect of the healing process. Comfort is a basic need and refers to the patient's physical and emotional well-being. It is essential to identify and analyze the factors that influence the patient's comfort in the context of his physical health, lifestyle, living environment and cultural values.

The purpose of the study is to clarify the concept of comfort, the various factors that influence patient comfort, to develop a multidimensional framework and practical nursing approaches to improve it.

Material and methods: the present study is based on the search, selection and critical review of scientific articles and other source documents related to the definition of the concept of comfort in healthcare; factors influencing the comfort of hospitalized patients; importance of comfort in the healing process and nursing care for its improvement.

Results and discussion: The analysis of the available literature proved that the main factors influencing patient comfort can be organizational and individual, namely: hospital environment, communication, pain management, cultural competence. Each of these factors can be monitored and the risk of discomfort reduced.

Conclusion: Providing comfort is a nursing process, function, and outcome. Increasing the comfort level of each patient is individual and is critical to providing quality and safe nursing care and achieving better health outcomes.

Key words: *comfort, comfort factors, patients, nursing care*

Introduction

Ensuring patient comfort in modern healthcare facilities is a determining factor and indicator of the quality and safety of healthcare. Comfort is a basic need and refers to the patient's physical and emotional well-being. Comfort level is a key aspect in the healing process. In planning and implementing nursing care, it is essential to identify and analyze the factors that influence the patient's comfort in the context of his physical health, lifestyle, living environment and cultural values.

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Defining the concept of comfort in healthcare

Comfort is a concept that has been explored by a number of authors and is embedded in most conceptual models of nursing care. In the 19th century, Florence Nightingale accepted that the goal of caring for the sick is to create conditions for a comfortable self-esteem for the patient and the best sanitary-hygienic conditions for maintaining impaired functions. Calista Roy's adaptation model emphasizes the importance of stressors and psychological comfort. Ida Orlando's model defines comfort as a response to human needs, and according to Hildegard Peplau, comfort is a basic human need related to food, rest, sleep and communication. [1, 2].

Kolcaba K. [3, 4, 5] defines comfort as relief, lightness, and transcendence. She describes four contexts in which comfort can be assessed for the patient: physical, psychospiritual, environmental, and sociocultural.

[Figure 1]

All these concepts are related to the bio-psycho-social concept of health and disease and the definition of health proposed in the constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) 1948, according to which "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" [6]

It defines a person's health as a state in which there are no somatic impairments and (or) physical and mental dysfunctions and he is in a state of bio-psycho-social comfort, i.e. has no subjective complaints and can perform freely and without restrictions the mental or social functions, which are limited only by his age and sex, and this state is called "well-being".

In the disease, the bio-psycho-social comfort is disturbed. The disease can also be described as a set of different somatic disabilities, somatic, mental and social dysfunctions that cause "discomfort" in the form of complaints, behavioral and social changes.

According to research by Wensley, et al. [7], comfort is transitory and multidimensional and, as defined by patients, includes more than the absence of pain. Patient perspectives on comfort are summarized in the following definition:

Comfort is a transitory and dynamic state characterized by the relief of pain, emotional and physical distress and an emerging sense of positivity, safety, strength and acceptance of the situation, which is supported and sustained by the feeling of being valued, cared for, confident and accepting treatment of choice. Complete comfort is elusive; rather, patients seek to feel as comfortable as possible in the circumstances of their healthcare interaction.

At the heart of this definition are the following four feelings of comfort that were identified in patient interview data:

- "Relief from pain, emotional and physical stress."
- "Feeling positive and safe."
- "Sense of confidence, control, acceptance of treatment and care of choice."
- "I feel cared for, valued; connecting positively with people and place"

In the nursing process, the planning and delivery of individualized and patient-centered care is the basis for achieving quality and efficiency in nursing practice. Determining the presence or absence of comfort is based on critical analysis and thorough evaluation of the collected patient data. Identification and determination of real and potential problems for which the nurse has the necessary competencies. An official list of nursing diagnoses approved by the North American Nursing Diagnosis Association NANDA and last updated for 2021 is used. . The International Classification of Nursing Diagnoses, NANDA-International (NANDA-I).

According to the definitions and classification in this list [8, 9], comfort is identified as:

- Physical - nausea, acute pain, chronic pain, labor pain, chronic pain syndrome
- Environmental comfort - impaired comfort, readiness for increased comfort
- Social comfort - risk of loneliness, social isolation, etc.

Identifying patient problems allows the nurse to develop a plan of nursing care, implement professionally competent nursing interventions, and make an assessment to assess whether expected outcomes have been achieved.

[Figure 2]

[Figure 3]

Pain management

Effective pain management is essential to increase patient comfort levels. To effectively manage pain and reduce patient discomfort, it is necessary to use a multidisciplinary approach. In nursing care, it is necessary to regularly assess and monitor pain levels to adjust pain management interventions, timely administration of pain medication prescribed by a physician, provision of non-pharmacological interventions such as massage therapy, relaxation techniques, and cognitive- behavioral therapy and monitoring their effectiveness [10].

According to Stoddard et al. [11], effective pain management improves patients' comfort levels and quality of life. Informing and educating patients about pain management is essential. Inadequate pain management can lead to anxiety, stress and frustration.

Environmental factors

The environment in which the patient receives care plays a crucial role in the level of comfort. Environmental factors such as lighting, noise, and temperature can affect patient comfort and reduce patient anxiety. Research results prove that the hospital environment provides cognitive, physical, and spiritual support through comfortable furnishings and space that supports patients' social relationships with family and hospital staff [12].

A clean and well-maintained environment is an indicator of the quality of care that patients receive. A dirty or untidy environment can lead to feelings of discomfort and anxiety. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2020), healthcare facilities must maintain a clean and hygienic environment to reduce the risk of infection and improve patient comfort [13].

Physical care

A number of studies have found that patients' perception of their physical care is positively related to their overall satisfaction with their hospital stay. Personalized nursing care related to assisting patients in meeting their needs for maintaining personal hygiene and appearance, such as bathing, dressing and grooming, etc., has been demonstrated. providing appropriate bedding, pillows and other equipment, providing mobility assistance also ensure patient comfort [14].

Communication

One of the critical factors influencing patient comfort is communication. Effective communication can reduce levels of anxiety and stress among patients, which can improve their comfort levels [15].

The nurse communicates with the patient from admission to hospital until discharge. The ability to listen and understand, build mutual trust, communicate accurately and clearly, and manage patient uncertainty are important components of effective communication. Communicating with the patient or his relatives, the nurse, from the position of his professional competences, must take into account the temperament, character, social status, intelligence, age, phase of the disease, and a number of other factors that have a bearing on the outcome of the disease. Applying a person-individual psychological approach to the sick person will reduce anxiety and stress levels among patients and improve their comfort levels. Studies show that poor communication with patients can lead to anxiety, confusion and frustration, and patient-centered communication can improve health outcomes and satisfaction with health care, and positively affects levels of of patient comfort [16,17].

Emotional and psychological support

During hospitalization, patients experience emotional stress, anxiety and depression. To cope with the emotional and psychological stress of patients, nurses provide emotional support by listening, empathizing with their feelings, providing information, training. This helps with their emotional and mental well-being and improves comfort levels. Patients who received emotional support had better outcomes in coping with pain [18].

Patient attitude plays an important role in comfort level. According to a study by Hojat et al. [19], compassionate and empathetic care positively influences patient satisfaction and trust in communication. Showing empathy is an important component in building trust. Lack of respect for the patient's autonomy and dignity can lead to dissatisfaction and discomfort [15].

Cultural factors

Cultural competence can improve patient satisfaction with health care and reduce health care disparities [20]. When analyzing and assessing patients' needs, it is necessary to take into account their cultural identity and beliefs in order to provide care that is consistent with their values and preferences.

Conclusion

Providing comfort is a nursing process, function, and outcome. Effective communication, pain management, physical care, and emotional and psychological support are critical factors that influence patient comfort levels. Increasing the comfort level of each patient is individual and is critical to providing quality and safe nursing care and achieving better health outcomes.

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Figure legends:

Figure 1: A multidimensional framework for patient comfort according to Kolcaba [3]

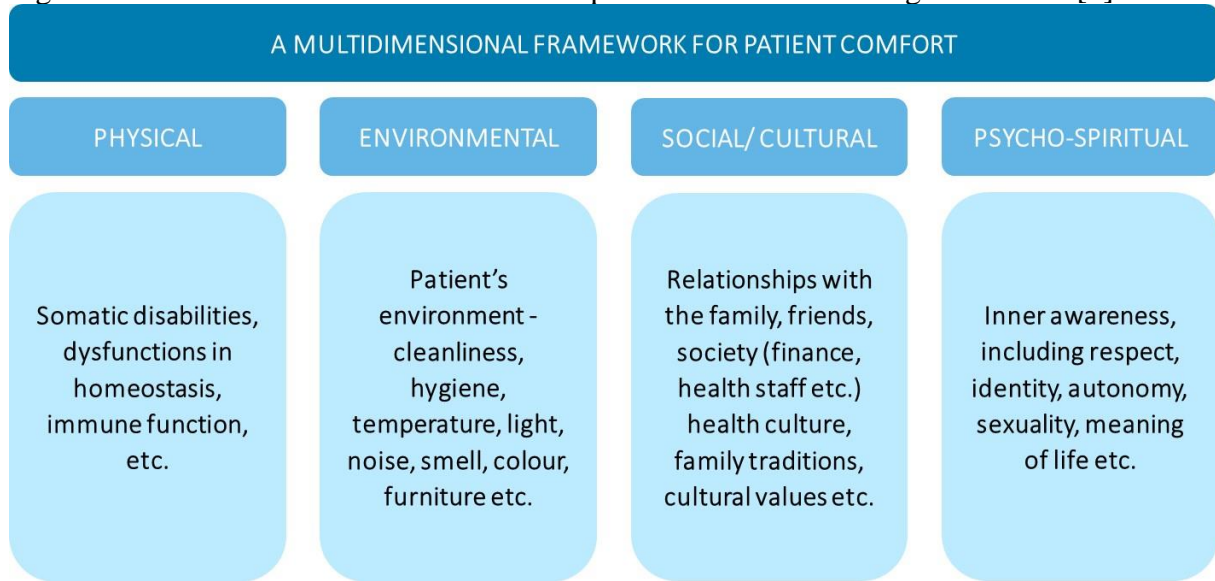


Figure 2: Factors affecting the comfort of hospitalized patients

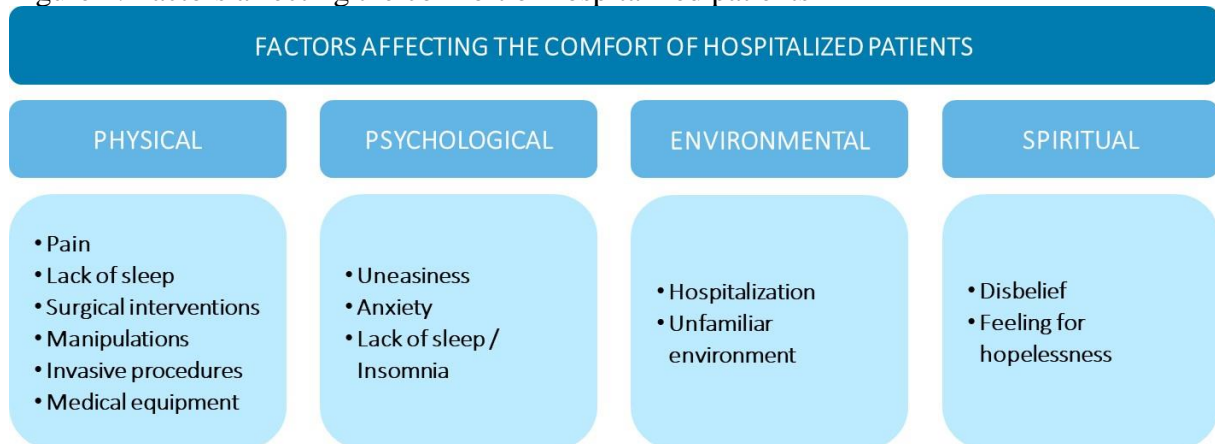


Figure 3: Practical approaches to nursing care to improve comfort of hospitalized patients

