



## Review

## Culturally sensitive communication in healthcare: A concept analysis

Laura A. Brooks<sup>a,\*</sup>, Elizabeth Manias<sup>a,b</sup>, Melissa J. Bloomer<sup>a,b</sup><sup>a</sup> School of Nursing and Midwifery, Deakin University, VIC, Australia<sup>b</sup> Centre for Quality and Patient Safety Research, Deakin University, VIC, Australia

## ARTICLE INFO

## Article history:

Received 9 January 2018

Received in revised form 30 July 2018

Accepted 23 September 2018

## Keywords:

Communication  
 Cultural diversity  
 Cultural sensitivity  
 Culture  
 Health  
 Quality of healthcare

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Limited guidance exists on culturally sensitive communication related to interactions between clinicians, patients and families.

**Objectives:** To explore the concept of culturally sensitive communication and identify clinical practice implications and knowledge gaps related to culturally sensitive communication in healthcare.

**Methods:** A concept analysis was undertaken, using Walker and Avant's (2011) framework which comprises eight consecutive steps to explore the concept and clinical practice implications. A systematic literature search was undertaken to identify papers published between January 1, 1995 and December 20, 2017, leading to the inclusion of 37 relevant research papers in the concept analysis.

**Results:** Based on the research literature, examples of model, borderline and contrary cases of culturally sensitive communication were developed. Three major uses of culturally sensitive communication were identified, including understanding one's own culture, open and sensitive communication, and strategies to collaborate with the patient and family for optimal patient care. An awareness of one's own cultural beliefs, values, attitudes and practices was identified as an essential first step before learning about other cultures. This awareness includes being sensitive and adaptive to individual cultural differences and relies on clinician self-understanding and reflection. Strategies to collaborate with the patient and family for patient care include respectful and supportive clinician interactions with the family that enable a collaborative approach to care.

**Conclusions:** This concept analysis aids understanding of culturally sensitive communication, the benefits and challenges associated with its use, and clinical practice implications.

© 2018 Australian College of Nursing Ltd. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Table 2

Concept of culturally sensitive communication: antecedents, attributes and consequences.

Antecedents	Defining attributes	Consequences
<p>The antecedents of culturally sensitive communication include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment and culture of the ward.</li> <li>• Organisational structures and policies.</li> <li>• Education and communication experience of clinicians.</li> <li>• Sociocultural characteristics of patients, families and clinicians.</li> <li>• Personal characteristics and professional experiences of clinicians.</li> </ul>	<p>From the literature, four defining attributes of culturally sensitive communication have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging patients and families to participate in communication and decision-making to the degree where they feel comfortable.</li> <li>• Prioritising cultural considerations in the planning and provision of care.</li> <li>• Developing a trusting relationship with the patient and family.</li> <li>• The use of a professional interpreter, a best practice recommendation where language differences exist between clinicians, patients and families.</li> </ul>	<p>Outcomes associated with the use of culturally sensitive communication include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased patient and family satisfaction.</li> <li>• Improved adherence to treatment regimens.</li> <li>• Better engagement in patient and family centred care.</li> <li>• Improved health outcomes.</li> </ul>