



# Communication and Public Access to Healthcare Information: A Study on Rural Patients

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**Abstracts:** Communication is important for every moment of our daily life. Communication is so crucial in healthcare service. Communication gap can lead to patients to death. In healthcare services to describe the medical terms the healthcare professionals use specialized language. The medical terminology is not known by the general people. In the village areas most of the people are not aware of the medical terminology. The communication of medical terminology is associated with the patient satisfaction. Sometimes it may be happened the patient can no able to communicate with the healthcare providers and the healthcare providers cannot make patients understand about their medical conditions. This study has been conducted in South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal to understand the satisfaction of the rural patients by the communication of healthcare service providers. The population of the study is the rural patients. For the collection of primary data, we have selected 150 respondents from the patients who have come to the rural medical service providers by the use of Purposive Sampling Method. The study revealed that communication is highly linked to the patient satisfaction. Most of the healthcare service seekers are unable to read the prescription due to the lack of knowledge regarding medical terminology. Some time the hand writing of the medical service providers are unable readout. In the Microsoft Excel and SPSS software was used to analysis the collected data. For the satisfaction of the patient healthcare communication is highly important.

**Keywords:** Healthcare, Communication and Rural Patients



**1.0 Introduction:** Communication is the process of sharing thoughts and information to others. To understand something or to make others understand something communication is very much important. The healthcare system is the dependable sector in the society. Healthcare is the integrated part of our life. We cannot live without healthcare services. Healthcare professionals are like the God to the patients. The people who are involved in healthcare system are working day and night for the benefits of the humankind. Healthcare communication is very crucial for both the service providers and service receivers (Patients). The patients' satisfaction is depended on the healthcare. Healthcare communication is also the both way communication. The healthcare communication is done by the use of medical terminology that is a specialized language. The patients are not conscious about the medical terminology. The patients are with less education also cannot able to make out the specialized language. The Prescription is written with the special language and symbols that are not aware to the patient. The terminology of the diseases and condition of the diseases are described by the medical terminology. For that the patient is not able to understand the healthcare communication properly. They cannot make out about their health problems. The miscommunication or wrong interpretation may create in healthcare advice. Sometime the miscommunication or wrong interpretation may lead to death. The communication gap creates dissatisfaction among the patients. Effective communication can reduce healthcare errors to both the patients and the healthcare service providers.

## 2.0 Literature Review

There are a number of barriers in communication which leads to dissatisfaction to the patients (Korsch et al., 1968). Communication tool is very important for patients' satisfaction (Touati et al., 2022). The patients misunderstand the medical communication very frequently (Simmons et al., 2015). Particularly in the low- or middle-income countries it is a great problem of patients- physicians' communication and the issues of patients – physician communication is a barrier to develop the healthcare services (Gao et al., 2024). The patients – pharmacists communication is very crucial in healthcare system, it is important to know the gap of the patient's expectation and requirement to develop the patients – pharmacists communication (Kim et al., 2020). The clinicians are facing time pressure while they are going to communicate with patients (Fortin, 2002). Healthcare communication is important for the patient's satisfaction. Healthcare communication is very much responsible for the patient's satisfaction and for the improvement of the entire healthcare system. The patients- providers' communication is depended on the racial or ethnic communities (Villani & Mortensen, 2014). The medical professionals are performing a crucial part for the patient satisfaction (Pelletier et al., 2019). Communication is an notable practice in our daily life for the different satisfactions (Craig, 2016). Patient centered care is very much important in healthcare management for the patient satisfaction (Rozenblum et al., 2013). The process of communication can be mentioned from the patient- physician communication point of view for the high level of patient satisfaction (Goldjweig et al., 2014). The communication skill is very much important to maintain the patient – physician relationship (Biglu et al., 2017). Waiting time is very much crucial for the patient satisfaction (Lee et al., 2020). Communication must be done with the reference of the classification of the particular disease (Meredith, 1993). The high-quality healthcare services and the patient satisfaction depend on quality communication (DiMattio & Hays, 1980). Nurse – Patient's communication develops the relationship between the patients and nurses (Alshalawi et al., 2025). The patients have a desire to know more information about their diseases and the clinical conditions (Whalen et al., 2024)

**3.0 Scope of the Present Study:** This study has been conducted in the rural hospitals in the South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal to know the patients' satisfactions on the healthcare communication. The study also highlighted the communication gap and its impacts on patient's satisfaction. Healthcare communication is very much important in the society. Without proper healthcare communication the healthcare services cannot be fruitful. This study will be very helpful to the healthcare professionals and the patients. To deliver the quality healthcare services to patients the healthcare communication must be patient centric. The society will be benefited by the study. The patient centered healthcare communication is incorporated to provide good quality communication. To build up the relationship with the patients and healthcare professionals the proper communication is highly needed.

## 4.0 Statement of the Problem

Healthcare professionals are devoted to provide medical service to the patients. Healthcare communication is highly needed to the patient. Most of the patients are unable to understand the medical terminology. The healthcare service

providers have no time to discuss about the problems and prospects of the diseases the patients have been suffering. The patients desire to have relevant information regarding their treatment and medical advices. Medical service is described by the specialized language or medical terming. Without proper commutation a communication gap is created among the patient and service providers.

After completing literature review and based on the problem the researcher has designed the below mentioned research questions for the current study:

- 1) What are the different stages healthcare communications that affects the patients' satisfaction?
- 2) How does communicant gap create problems in patient satisfaction in rural healthcare system?

**5.0 Research Gap:** After literature review it has been understood that there are a few studies have been incorporated in the field of healthcare to understand the effects of communication gap on the patient's satisfaction. Some studies have been conducted in others areas but no such study has been conducted in the South 24 Parganas district to understand the impacts of communication gap in healthcare system on patients' satisfaction. Patients' satisfaction is the foremost outcome of the healthcare system. The patients and service provider relationship can be formed by the effective communication. The researcher has identified the rural hospitals in the South 24 Pargnas district to understand the demographics and satisfaction after having the healthcare service.

## 6.0 Objectives for the Study

- 1) To know the various levels of communication in the rural healthcare for the patient's satisfaction
- 2) To understand the impacts of communication gap in the rural healthcare for the patient's satisfaction.

## 7.0 Hypotheses

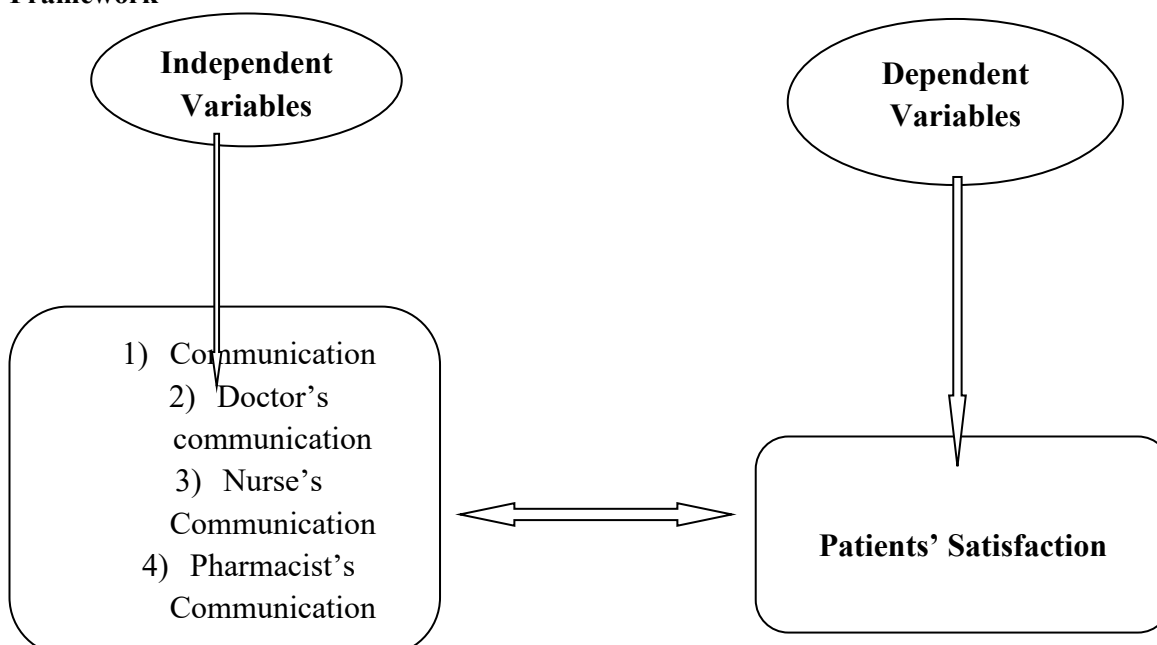
**Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** There is a link between Doctor's Communication and Patients' Satisfaction

**Hypothesis (H<sub>2</sub>):** There is an association between the Nurse's Communication and Patients' Satisfaction.

**Hypothesis (H<sub>3</sub>):** There is a link between the Pharmacist's communications and Patients' Satisfaction

**Hypothesis (4):** There is an association between the Communication and Patients' Satisfaction.

## Framework



**Figure 1: Conceptual Research Framework (By Author)**



## 9.0 Research Methodology

In this study the researcher has tried to understand the impacts of communication gap among the patients and healthcare professionals. The study has been conducted in the rural hospital's areas like, Kakdwip Super Specialty Hospital, Gadmathura Rural Hospital, Pathar Pratima Hospital, Belpukur Rural Hospital, Raidighi Rural Hospital, Purandarapur Rural Hospital, Kulpi Rural Hospital. The present study is descriptive and cross sectional in nature. 150 respondents have been identified for the study. The Purposive sampling technique has been incorporated for the study. The patients are the respondents for the study. The data has been gathered by the use of structured questionnaire. The Five – Point Scale (Likert) has been used in the study. The scale was designed at either end of the scale “Strong Disagree “or “trongly Agree”. The questionnaire has been divided into two sections. The first section of questionnaire contains the general information and the second (2<sup>ND</sup>) part of the questionnaire contains the information OF the variables like Patients' Satisfaction, Communication, Doctor's Communication, Pharmacist's Communication and Nurse's Communication. Microsoft Excel and statistical software SPSS have been used to analyze the data for the present study.

## 10.0 Data Analysis and Findings:

**Table No 1 Distribution of the Respondents**

Characteristics	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
Below 30	24	16
31 to 40	42	28
41 to 50	48	32
Above 50	36	24
<b>Education Status</b>		
Below Secondary	66	44
Secondary	39	26
Higher Secondary	24	16
Above Higher Secondary	21	14
<b>Monthly Income Level</b>		
Below 20K	96	64
20K – 40K	42	28
Above 40K	12	08

**Age Details of the Respondents:** As per the Table No1 it has been found that 16 % of the answer givers are from the age category of below 30 and 28 % of answer givers are in the age grouping of 31 to 40. 32 % of answer givers are in the age grouping of 41 to 50 and 24 % of respondents are in the age grouping of above 50 years. As per the result of the Table No 1 we may conclude that most of the rural people who are taking Government hospital facilities are in the age grouping of 41 to 50 (Fifty) years of age the patients who are in the age class of below 30 are less in the rural healthcare services.

**Educational Status of the Respondents:** The Table 1 indicates that 44 % of interviewees are having the educational qualification of below Secondary Level and 26% of answer givers are having the secondary level of education. 16 % of answer providers are having the Higher Secondary (HS) level of education and 14 % of the repliers are with above Higher Secondary (HS) Level of Education. According to the result of the Table No 1 it has been concluded that most of the patients in rural healthcare services are having the below secondary level of education the patients who are having above higher secondary (HS) educational qualification are very rarely found in the rural healthcare services.

**Monthly Income Level:** According to the Table No 1 it has been noticed that 64 % of repliers have the monthly income of below Rs. 20K and 28 % of repliers have their monthly income of 20K to 40K. 08 % repliers have their have their



monthly income of Rs above 40K. As per the Table No 1 it has been seen that most of the patients in rural healthcare system are with the monthly income of below Rs 20K and the monthly income level of above Rs 40K are rarely seen in the rural healthcare system.

### Reliability Statistics:

**Table No 2: Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.787	20

The value of Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient is between 0 and 1. The general rule of Cronbach's Alpha value .70 and above value is good and more than .80 is good. According to the Table No 2 the value of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient is 0.787. According to the result of the Table No 2 we may consider that the reliability of the questionnaire is in good level.

### Correlation Analysis

#### Hypothesis 1: There is a link between Doctor's Communication and Patients' Satisfaction

**Table 3: Correlations between Patient Satisfaction and Doctor's Communication**

		PS	DC
PS	Pearson Correlation	1	.726**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0
	N	150	150
DC	Pearson Correlation	.726**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

PS- Patient Satisfaction,

DC- Doctor's Communication

Data collected by the authors

As per the table no 3 it has been seen that the correlation coefficient between Patient Satisfaction (PS) and Doctor's Communication (DC) is .726 at the significant level of 0.01. For that it may be accepted the hypothesis 1 that is there is a link between the Patient Satisfaction and Doctor's Communication with highly positive relationship ( $r = .726^{**}$ ).

#### Hypothesis 2: There is an association between the Nurse's Communication and Patients' Satisfaction.

**Table No 4: Correlations Between Patient Satisfaction and Nurse's Communication**

		PS	NC
PS	Pearson Correlation	1	.728**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0
	N	150	150
NC	Pearson Correlation	.728**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Ps- Patient Satisfaction, NC- Nurse's Communication

Data is collected through Survey



The Table No 4 indicates that the correlation between Patient Satisfaction and Nurse's Communication is .728 at the significant level of 0.01. For that the hypothesis 2 is accepted that there is a link between the Patient Satisfaction (PS) AND Nurse's Communication (NC) and there is also a highly positive relationship ( $r = .728^{**}$ ).

### Hypothesis 3: There is a link between the Pharmacist's communications and Patients' Satisfaction

**Table No 5: Correlations between Patient Satisfaction and Pharmacist's Communication**

		PS	PC
PS	Pearson Correlation	1	.650**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		0
	N	150	150
PC	Pearson Correlation	.650**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	0	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

PS- Patient Communication, PC- Pharmacist's Communication.

Data Collected through survey.

According to the Table No 5 the correlation coefficient between Patient Satisfaction (PS) AND Pharmacist's Communication (PC) IS .650 at a significant level of 0.01. So in this respect we may accept the hypothesis 3 that there is an association between Patient Satisfaction (PS) and Pharmacist's Communication (PC) with highly positive relationship ( $r = .650^{**}$ ).

### Multiple Regression Analysis

#### Hypothesis 4: There is an association between the Communication and Patients' Satisfaction.

**Table No 6: Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. Change	F
1	.829 <sup>a</sup>	.687	.681	.27132	.687	106.862	3	146	.000	

a. Predictors: (Constant), PC, DC, NC

b. Dependent Variable: PS

PC- Pharmacist's Communication, DC- Doctor's Communication, NC- Nurse's Communication, PS- Patient Satisfaction

Data is collected through survey.

The value of Adjusted R Square (Table No 6) is .681. The value of Adjusted R Square is indicated the about 68 % of variation of Patient Satisfaction is explained by the independent variables like Doctor's Communication (DC), Nurse's Communication (NC) and Pharmacist's Communication (PC).

**Table No 7: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.063	.214		-.293	.770
	DC	.426	.065	.396	6.554	.000
	NC	.431	.072	.379	6.004	.000
	PC	.208	.068	.191	3.066	.003

a. Dependent Variable: PS



PC- Pharmacist's Communication, DC- Doctor's Communication, NC- Nurse's Communication, PS- Patient Satisfaction

Data is collected through survey.

In the table no 7 the b values which represents the individual combination of each predictor to the regression model. The table indicates that the Unstandardized Coefficients of Doctor's Communication (DC) is .426 with P value of .000 that ensures the resulted value is statistically significant. So it may be explained that on unit change in Doctor's Communication (DC) leads to .426 unit changes in Patient Satisfaction (PS). The Unstandardized Coefficients of Nurse's Communication (NC) is .431 with the P Value of .000 which ensures the statistical value is significant, For that we may estimate on unit change in Nurse's Communication (NC) leads to .431 unit changes in Patient Satisfaction (PS). The Unstandardized Coefficient of Pharmacist's Communication (PC) is .208 with the P value of .003 which is statistically significant. For that it may be explained on unit change in Nurse's Communication (NC) leads to .208-unit changes in Patient Satisfaction (PS).

### 11.0 Finding and Discussion:

The researcher has conducted the present study to understand the impact of communication gap between the patient and the healthcare service providers. The researchers also highlighted the influences of communication on the patient's satisfaction in the rural health care services. The study has been conducted in the rural areas of South 24 Parganas districts. The data was gathered from the patients who have come to take medical or healthcare services from the rural government hospitals. It has been observed that most of the patients are belong to low income family and with the minimum educational qualifications. The healthcare communication is performed by the using of various medical terminologies which are specialized languages. As maximum of the patients are with minimum education are unable to understand the healthcare communication. Every patient wants to have more information about their diseases and treatment and advice. Healthcare service is important for the patient satisfaction. For the satisfaction of the patients the doctor's communication, nurse's communication and the pharmacist's communication play a vital role. Without proper communication the objectives of the healthcare services cannot be fulfilled.

### 12.0 Recommendation & Scope for Further Study

It is very much crucial to mitigate the communication gap between the healthcare service providers and the healthcare service seekers. The communication between patient physicians is very much important in healthcare services. The study has been conducted in the rural hospitals areas of South 24 Parganas Districts to know how healthcare communication is crucial for the patient satisfaction. The patient and the patient party generally want to know about their diseases and the condition from the service providers. Sometimes the miscommunication can lead to the death. This study can be beneficial to the patients and the healthcare service providers. The study can be beneficial to the involved nurses and the pharmacists and doctors who are involved in healthcare services. For the improvement of the communication and to implement the effective communication. The similar study can be implemented in the different healthcare institutions to know the impacts of communication on the satisfaction of the patients.

### 13.0 Conclusion

The current study has been done in the rural hospitals in the South 24 Parganas districts to understand the role of healthcare communication on the patient satisfaction. The study has identified that healthcare communication is very much depended for the patient satisfaction. For the effective healthcare services communication is very much crucial. Without proper communication the objectives of healthcare services cannot be justified. Every healthcare institution should look after the effective communication. The healthcare communication should be patient centered. The healthcare professionals like doctors, nurses and pharmacists who are connected in healthcare service. All the stakeholders including Government and NGO (Non Government Organization) should actively participate to develop the quality of healthcare communication. For patient's satisfaction and quality healthcare services it is very much crucial to minimize the gap between the patient service providers communication gap.



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