Patients' perceptions regarding nursing care in the general surgical wards at Kenyatta national hospital

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Abstract:

Background: Nursing care is a major component of the health services because it is one of the determinants of quality health services. The anecdotal patients' care evaluation and media reports have portrayed negative publicity and image regarding nursing care in certain hospitals. Patients' perceptions regarding nursing care is thought to be the determinant of quality nursing care. Aim of the study: To explore patients' perceptions and experiences regarding nursing care in surgical wards. Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted at Kenyatta National Hospital in general surgical wards between April and June, 2012. The study population was adult postoperative patients admitted in the general surgical wards (SA, SB and SD). The data collection tool was a structured questionnaire with open and closed questions. Ethical clearance was secured from University of Nairobi and Kenyatta National Hospital Ethics Committee. Participation in the study was voluntary and based on patients' ability to give informed consent.

Results: A total of 168 adult patients from general surgical wards were approached and 167 of them participated in the study (non-response rate of 0.6%). Most patients agreed that they expected nurses to be knowledgeable with an average response of 86% and strongly disagreed that nurses should be rude and harsh (44%). The elderly reported that they had a better experience of pain management than the younger patients (m>3.36). Almost all patients reported that nurses were usually responding quickly when they needed pain medication. The elderly were very satisfied with nursing care with mean response (m>4.00). Most patients (52.4%) were satisfied with wound dressing. Generally, (50.2%) with a mean response (m>2.50) were satisfied with nursing care provided though some complained that nurses were not introducing themselves (41%), some nurses were rude (16.7%), their privacy was not respected and nurses were not providing adequate information. Most participants (40.5%) indicated that they had a good perception of the nursing care and 22.6% recommended that nursing staff should be added and 11.3% reported that quality of nursing care was poor. Conclusion and recommendation: Patients' perceptions were influenced by how nurses were conducting themselves towards patients. The need to improve on nurses' interpersonal skills and relationship, and behaviour towards patients was recommended.