

THE ROLE OF THE MEDICAL TEAM IN COMMUNICATION AND HOLISTIC RECOVERY OF PATIENTS WITH HYPERTENSION

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INTRODUCTION

Communication between the medical team and the patient is particularly important, especially since the patient is a physically and emotionally vulnerable person, on one hand, but also increasingly well informed, on the other hand. He is no longer just a spectator of the medical act, he is an active part of the treatment and healing process [1]. Through effective and empathetic communication, with the transmission of a sense of security, a good relationship between the medical staff and the patient will be established, essential for obtaining their compliance [2].

Patient relationship management refers to the strategic and operational approach used by healthcare providers to manage and develop the relationship with their patients. It involves a series of activities and processes aimed at improving communication, increasing patient satisfaction and ensuring efficient and personalized care [3].

In Romania, according to SEPHAR III study carried out in 2016, the prevalence of hypertension is 45.1% among the adult population [4], being higher in men (50% or even more) compared to women and being higher in rural areas compared to the urban environment [5]. Compared to the population of Romania, it means that in 2016 an estimated 7.4 million people had high blood pressure [6]. Con-

Interdisciplinary collaboration is key to a holistic approach to the treatment and recovery of hypertensive patients. Each specialist makes a valuable contribution, from health assessment and monitoring, to patient education and emotional support. The physical medicine and rehabilitation doctor, occupational therapist, physical education instructor, nurse, psychologist and cardiologist collaborate to provide a comprehensive and personalized treatment. Effective communication between patients and the medical team, the development of trust, mutual respect and empathy are essential for the success of this process, ensuring careful monitoring and constant adjustment of the treatment plan according to the evolution of each patient.

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sidering this high prevalence in Romania, it is particularly important to have an interdisciplinary team made up of the physical medicine and rehabilitation doctor, the occupational therapist, the physical education instructor, the nurse, the psychologist and the cardiologist who, through an integrated multidisciplinary approach, ensures the monitoring and treatment of hypertensive patients. Effective communication between patients and the medical team is vital to the success of this process, ensuring close monitoring and constant adjustment of the treatment plan according to each patient's progress. Certainly, hypertensive patients also need a personalized recovery program in which the role of the physical education instructor and the physiotherapist is very important. The benefits of individualized physical therapy programs are multiple, including improving physical and mental health, reducing blood pressure, and preventing complications, while achieving optimal health and maintaining an active life. Also, educating patients and engaging them in their own recovery process is critical to long-term success.

The physical recovery of hypertensive patients involves a multidisciplinary team of specialists, each playing a vital role in the rehabilitation process. The composition of this team includes: the physical medicine and rehabilitation doctor, the occupational therapist, the physical education instructor - sports teacher, the nurse, the psychologist and the cardiologist.

The physical medicine and rehabilitation physician plays a central role in managing the recovery process of hypertensive patients. He is responsible for the initial assessment of the patient's condition, identification of specific needs, development of a personalized treatment plan and establishment of an effective recovery program. Within the medical team, the physical medicine and rehabilitation doctor works closely with other specialists, ensuring that treatments and therapies are well integrated. This interdisciplinary collaboration is essential to provide patients with a holistic and coordinated approach to their recovery. The physician recommends specific exercises to be implemented by physical education instructors or may coordinate with the psychologist to address the emotional aspects of recovery. The physical medicine and rehabilitation physician must also be a good communicator and

show empathy for patients. Understanding and addressing patients' concerns, as well as providing emotional support, can significantly contribute to the success of treatment. Patients who feel supported and understood are more likely to follow medical recommendations and actively collaborate in the recovery process.

The occupational therapist plays an essential role in the recovery of hypertensive patients, although in Romania this profession is not very widespread yet. This specialist focuses on helping patients regain and improve the skills needed to carry out daily activities. By thoroughly assessing the individual patient's needs and capabilities, the occupational therapist can develop personalized plans to facilitate independence and improve quality of life. The occupational therapist works closely with other members of the medical team to ensure an integrated approach to treatment. For example, he may work with the physical education instructor to develop tailored exercises that improve the patient's mobility and strength. Also, collaboration with the psychologist is essential to address the emotional and psychological aspects of recovery, ensuring that patients receive the necessary support to maintain their motivation and commitment to the rehabilitation process. An important aspect of the occupational therapist's work is patient and family education. The therapist provides information and training on relapse prevention methods, the importance of maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle, and how to use assistive equipment.

The physical education instructor, also known as the sports teacher, plays a vital role in the recovery of hypertensive patients by developing and implementing exercise programs adapted to their specific needs. It assesses patients' physical capabilities and creates exercise plans to help lower blood pressure and improve overall health. A well-structured exercise program can help reduce the risk of cardiovascular complications and improve patients' quality of life.

An essential aspect of the physical education instructor's role is to instruct patients in correct exercise techniques to prevent injury and maximize the benefits of physical activity. Exercises should be tailored to each patient's fitness level, considering any physical limitations or associated conditions. The instructor should closely monitor the patients' progress and adjust the exercise program as they improve their physical capacity. The physical education instructor works closely with other members of the medical team to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to treatment. For example, he may collaborate with the physical medicine and rehabilitation physician to adjust exercises based on the patient's progress in health, or he may work with the occupational therapist to develop activities that improve both physical fitness and functionality in daily activities.

The nurse plays a very important role in the recovery process of hypertensive patients, being one of the members of the medical team that interacts most frequently and directly with patients. This role involves a variety of responsibilities that are critical to ensuring the continuity and quality of medical care. The nurse is often the first point of contact for patients, facilitating communication between them and other members of the medical team. An essential aspect of the nurse's work is the constant monitoring of patients'

health. This includes regular measurement of blood pressure, monitoring of symptoms and assessment of response to the given treatments. By carefully monitoring these parameters, the nurse can detect any change in the patient's condition in time, allowing for quick and appropriate intervention by the medical team. Medication administration is another major responsibility of the nurse.

The psychologist has an essential role in the medical team, contributing to the recovery of hypertensive patients by addressing the emotional and psychological aspects of the disease. High blood pressure affects not only the physical condition of the patient, but also the mental and emotional condition. Stress, anxiety and depression are common among patients with chronic conditions, and psychological interventions can help manage these problems, thereby improving overall treatment outcomes.

One of the main goals of the psychologist is to provide emotional support to patients. This support can include individual counselling, group therapy and stress management interventions. The psychologist helps patients understand their emotions and develop effective strategies to deal with anxiety and stress related to their condition, with an impact on reducing tension values.

The cardiologist plays a central role in the management of hypertensive patients, having primary responsibility for monitoring and treating cardiovascular conditions. High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease, and the cardiologist is essential in evaluating patients' cardiovascular status and developing an appropriate treatment plan.

A crucial aspect of a cardiologist's job is diagnosing and treating complications associated with high blood pressure, such as heart failure, heart attack, and stroke. Early interventions and personalized treatments are essential to prevent the deterioration of patients' health.

In addition to clinical aspects, the cardiologist plays an important role in educating patients about the importance of lifestyle changes to manage hypertension. This includes advice on diet, exercise and smoking cessation. Hypertensive patients benefit enormously from a holistic approach that includes both drug treatments and changes in daily habits. Patient education is thus an essential pillar of the cardiologist's work. Interdisciplinary collaboration is also an essential aspect of the cardiologist's role. He must work closely with the physical medicine and rehabilitation physician, the occupational therapist, the physical education instructor, and the psychologist to develop a comprehensive and integrated treatment plan. This multidisciplinary approach ensures that all aspects of the patient's health are addressed and that interventions are well coordinated to maximize positive outcomes.

In order to see all these aspects, in 2023 a study was carried out in an urban recovery ward on a number of 110 patients who agreed to participate, from the total of those consulted during the mentioned year.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

The study carried out had the following specific objectives:

- Identifying the main aspects of managing the relationship with patients in the medical recovery department.
- Evaluation of the impact of effective management of the medical team-patient relationship on patient satisfaction and treatment outcomes.
- Analyze strategies and tools used to improve patient relationship management in the recovery ward.
- Proposing practical recommendations for improving the management of the relationship with patients in this context.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Two types of tools were used to carry out the study.

The first tool used was a questionnaire with a set of 7 questions addressed to the participating patients. The questionnaire included questions about demographic characteristics, general experience in the department of physical medicine and rehabilitation, overall evaluation of services and medical care provided, communication with the medical team, establishing and maintaining the therapeutic relationship, personalization of medical services, scheduling and time management consultation, the use of technology in patient relationship management. The evaluation was done by giving a score from 1 to 5 depending on the level of satisfaction (1 being the minimum score and 5 being the maximum score).

The second tool used was that of direct observation in the recovery ward, with tracking of medical team-patient interactions, communication and work flow within the ward. Observations were documented through field notes and recordings to provide a complete and detailed picture of the practices and approaches used in managing the patient relationship. Observations allowed the capture of medical team-patient interactions, how appointments are managed and how technology is used in communication and organization, providing a concrete perspective on how these are carried out in a real context.

Relevant documents such as policies, procedures, information brochures and training materials used in the practice were reviewed to obtain additional information and context. This documentary review provided valuable insights into the strategies and approaches used in patient relationship management, contributing to a more complete understanding of office practices. The review of internal documents supplemented the data obtained through interviews and observations, providing additional information about existing policies and procedures for managing the patient relationship.

Data collected from interviews, observations and document analysis were studied using qualitative methods such as coding and categorization, with interpretation of results and formulation of relevant conclusions.

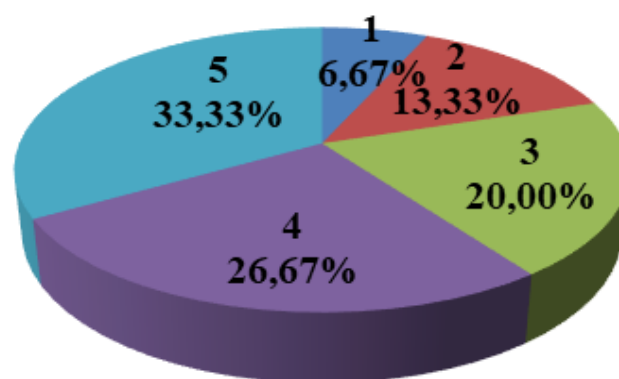
The limitations of the research were the following: the sample size and the specificity of the context in which the study was conducted. Even so, the results provided a solid basis for understanding and further exploring patient relationship management within medical recovery

wards. It is important to note that in a case study the sample size may be narrow and focuses on a single entity or specific situation. Therefore, the generalizability of the results may be limited, and the focus is on a deep understanding of the case under investigation.

RESULTS

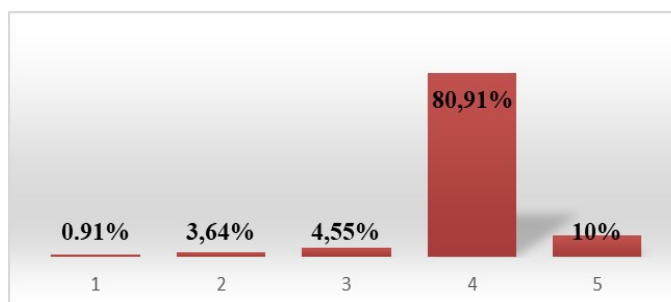
- 39% of the patients who were administered the questionnaire are aged between 40 and 60 years, of which 52% are women;
- Regarding the level of education, 60% have high school education, and 35% have higher education;
- The level of evaluation of medical care in the rehabilitation ward was rated 4 by more than half of the respondents (54%), and with a score of 5 by more than a third (34%);
- 73% of respondents would recommend the department to other people;
- Regarding team-patient communication within the ward, opinions were divided, 34% gave a score of 5, 27% a score of 4, 20% a score of 3, 13% a score of 2 (figure 1);

Figure 1 - Team-patient communication assessment



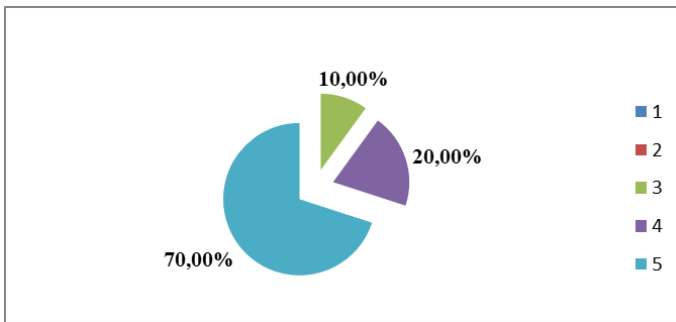
- 84% of the respondents believe that they received the necessary information and explanations about their health status and treatment options (figure 2);

Figure 2 - Appreciation of receiving information and explanations regarding the medical condition



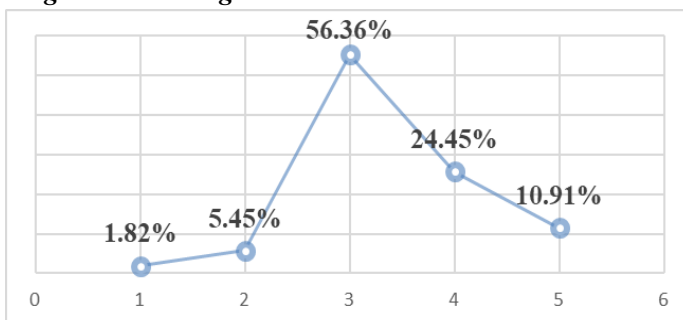
- 70% of patients declared that they have full confidence in the medical team, 20% have high confidence (figure 3);

Figure 3 - Level of confidence in the medical team



- 59% perceived that they were treated with empathy;
- 92% declared that they had a continuous and lasting relationship with the medical team involved in physical recovery;
- 72% of respondents declared that medical services were adapted to individual needs and preferences, 40% giving the maximum score of 5, and 32% the score of 4;
- Regarding the involvement in the decision-making process regarding treatment and medical care, the answers were divided, 37% gave the maximum score, 24.5% gave the score 4 and also 24.5% gave the score 3, and 14% the score 2;
- 73% believe that they have received guidance and counseling for the management of the health condition in a personalized way;
- 72% of respondents believe that the management of appointments and consultation time was good and very good;
- 56% of the respondents appreciate the waiting time as satisfactory (figure 4);

Figure 4 - Waiting time evaluation



- 68% consider that they were given enough time and attention during medical consultations;
- 78% managed to contact the department by phone;
- 76% used the section's online scheduling system;
- Regarding access to test results and online medical history, approximately 45% of respondents gave scores of 4 and 5;
- the impact of technology on the medical team -patient relationship was perceived by approximately 63% of respondents as good and very good.

DISCUSSIONS

- Effective staff-patient communication: Open communication, active listening and clear communication of information have been shown to be fundamental in the staff-patient relationship. Patients emphasized the importance of clear and accessible communication in order to be actively involved in the care process and to feel understood and respected. As a result of analyzing the responses to the questionnaires, it was found globally that a majority of patients are satisfied or very satisfied with the communication with the medical team as well as with the explanations received from it.
- Establishing and maintaining the therapeutic relationship: in the medical team-patient relationship, the development of trust, mutual respect and empathy are particularly important. Patients emphasized the importance of a medical team-patient relationship based on trust and respect, with empathy and availability to respond to their needs and concerns. It was observed that a significant percentage of respondents rated positively both the trust and the degree of respect and explanations received.
- Personalization of medical services: adaptation to the individual needs and preferences of patients is recognized as a crucial aspect of managing the relationship with them. Patient feedback was positive regarding preferences, treatment and medical care.
- Efficient management of appointments and consultation time: the need for efficient management of appointments and consultation time has been demonstrated to minimize waiting time and ensure a more satisfactory experience for patients. Following the analysis of the questionnaires, a need to improve waiting times is identified, with more than 50% of patients giving an average rating in this chapter.
- Technology and its impact on the medical team-patient relationship: The use of technology in patient relationship management has presented both benefits and challenges. Patients welcomed the use of IT systems for online appointments and access to medical information, but also highlighted concerns about the difficulties of accessing it.

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Interdisciplinary collaboration is key to a holistic approach to the treatment and recovery of hypertensive patients. Each specialist makes a valuable contribution, from health assessment and monitoring, to patient education and emotional support. The physical medicine and rehabilitation doctor, occupational therapist, physical education instructor, nurse, psychologist and cardiologist collaborate to provide a comprehensive and personalized treatment. Effective communication between patients and the medical team is vital to the success of this process, ensuring close monitoring and constant adjustment of the treatment plan according to each patient's progress.

- Effective communication in the patient-medical team relationship is a fundamental element for the success of the recovery process. By ensuring an open and constant dialogue, the medical team can adapt treatments to the specific needs of patients, offering both physical and psychological support. This holistic approach ensures a complete and sustainable recovery, significantly improving the quality of life of patients with various conditions and especially hypertensive ones.
- Open communication, active listening, and clear transmission of information increase trust, satisfaction, and collaboration in the health care process. It is important to adapt the level of communication to the level of education of the patient.
- Developing and maintaining a therapeutic relationship based on trust, respect and empathy is crucial to ensuring quality care. The physician and medical team must show empathy and be open to responding to patients' needs and concerns.
- Personalization of medical services can significantly improve the patient experience. Adapting to their individual needs and preferences can lead to increased satisfaction and better treatment outcomes.
- Efficient management of appointments and consultation time can reduce waiting time and increase consultation efficiency. Optimizing the scheduling process and proper time management contribute to increased patient satisfaction and efficient use of medical resources.
- The use of technology in patient relationship management can be beneficial, but must be balanced and must consider patients' needs for privacy and personal relationship with the doctor. The limitations of elderly patients in the use of technology must also be considered, as they also have the greatest need for medical services.
- Through well-coordinated physical therapy programs, emotional support and ongoing education, the medical team can help patients effectively manage their condition and improve their overall health. Commitment and cooperation between patients and medical professionals are fundamental to achieving these goals and ensuring a healthy and balanced life.
- The benefits of individualized physical therapy programs are multiple, including improving physical and mental health, reducing blood pressure, and preventing complications. Through exercises adapted to each patient specific needs and continuous monitoring, these programs help achieve optimal health and maintain an active life. Also, educating patients and engaging them in their own recovery process is critical to long-term success.
- In other words, the success of hypertensive patients recovery depends on a holistic, personalized and innovative approach, in which communication, interdisciplinary collaboration and the use of advanced technologies play essential roles. Commitment and cooperation between patients and medical professionals are fundamental to achieving these goals and ensuring a healthy and balanced life.

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