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PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES

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COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AS A FACTOR OF PROFESSIONAL GROWTH OF MEDICAL WORKERS

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Communication competence is a critical factor in the professional development of healthcare professionals, as it forms the basis for successful interactions with patients and colleagues. Effective communication allows physicians to accurately understand patients' needs and experiences, leading to better diagnosis and treatment. Patients who feel supported and understood are more likely to discuss their symptoms openly, improving healthcare services' quality. Communication skills help build trust between healthcare professionals and patients. When a physician demonstrates empathy and care, patients feel safe, which positively affects their attitude towards treatment and adherence to recommendations.

Communication plays a key role in teamwork. Doctors, nurses, and other professionals must clearly express their thoughts and share information, which is the basis for effectively coordinating actions and avoiding misunderstandings.

In addition, healthcare professionals with strong communication skills are more likely to advance in their careers. They can take on leadership, mentoring, or coordination roles, which increases their professional value within the team.

In this regard, the article aims to determine the importance of communicative competence for medical professionals, emphasising its role in ensuring quality

medical care and improving interaction with patients, identifying challenges in developing communication skills facing medical professionals, and suggesting ways to overcome them.

Keywords: communication, communicative competence, professional growth, medical professionals.

Communicative competence is relevant in the medical profession due to several key factors. First, effective communication is critically important for ensuring quality medical care. Medical workers interact daily with patients, their families and colleagues, and the ability to correctly convey information, listen and understand the needs of others is the key to successful diagnosis and treatment.

Second, in today's world, medical technology is rapidly evolving, requiring healthcare professionals to have technical knowledge and the ability to explain complex medical terms and procedures in simple language. This helps patients better understand their treatment and actively participate in the process.

In addition, a high level of communication competence contributes to improved relationships between healthcare professionals, increasing team effectiveness and reducing the risk of errors. This is important in environments where teamwork is the basis for providing quality healthcare.

Thus, developing communicative competence is not only a personal benefit for healthcare professionals but also a necessity for ensuring high standards of healthcare and patient satisfaction.

The article aims to determine the importance of communicative competence for medical professionals, emphasising its role in providing quality medical care and improving interaction with patients, identifying challenges in developing communication skills facing medical professionals, and suggesting ways to overcome them.

Involvement in communicative activities is a key means of ensuring constructive interaction in the educational process, as it contributes to the formation of communicative competence. This competence is a complex feature of future

specialists, which allows them to perform academic and professional tasks. It includes knowledge of speech culture, understanding the interlocutor, maintaining a dialogue using verbal and non-verbal means, expressing one's thoughts reasoned, and interpersonal communication skills essential for effective interaction.

According to the Law of Ukraine «On Education», competence is a dynamic combination of knowledge, abilities, skills, ways of thinking, views, values, and other personal qualities that determine a person's ability to successfully socialise, conduct professional and/or further educational activities [2].

According to the Law of Ukraine «On Higher Education», competence is the ability of a person to successfully socialise, study, and conduct professional activities, which arises based on a dynamic combination of knowledge, abilities, skills, ways of thinking, views, values, and other personal qualities [3].

The results of the analysis of scientific works give reason to assert that communicative competence is considered by scientists and researchers in various aspects. In particular, M. Zabrotsky interprets communicative competence as an integrated personal quality that ensures situational adaptability and implies a person's free mastery of verbal and non-verbal means of communication [3].

N. Khlistunova defines communicative competence as the ability to establish and maintain contacts with other members of society, a set of knowledge, skills and abilities that allow for effective communication [9].

T. Volfovska [3: 13] considers the concept of «communicative competence» as the level of experience, skills and abilities of interpersonal interaction that a person needs to successfully function in society, considering their skills and social status.

V. Ulrich believes that communicative competence consists of 1) linguistic competence, which means the ability to understand and create an unlimited number of correctly constructed sentences using learned rules their combination; 2) verbal-cognitive (subject) competence, which means the ability to process, group, remember, if necessary, update knowledge and factual data in memory, using linguistic notation; 3) verbal-communicative (pragmatic) competence – means the ability to take into account the contextual relevance of language units during speech communication for

the implementation of cognitive and communicative functions; 4) meta-competence – consists in understanding and knowledge of the conceptual apparatus, analysis and evaluation of means of speech communication [8: 17–21].

Therefore, communicative competence is interacting effectively and appropriately in different situations. It encompasses not only the ability to convey information but also to listen, understand, interpret and respond appropriately to the messages of others. In medicine, this is of particular importance: effective communication allows healthcare professionals to clearly explain diagnoses, treatment plans and procedures, which in turn helps patients to understand better and actively participate in their treatment. Clear communication also reduces the risk of errors in treatment, as worded requests and instructions minimise the likelihood of misinterpretation.

Healthcare professionals must be able to listen to patients and understand their needs and emotions. This builds trust and improves relationships, which are critical for effective treatment. In medical situations, patients often experience stress or fear. The ability of healthcare professionals to show empathy and support can significantly ease their feelings and improve the overall treatment experience. Because healthcare professionals work in teams where clear communication is essential for coordinating actions, well-developed communication skills help avoid misunderstandings and mistakes. Studies show that patients actively involved in decision-making are more likely to adhere to treatment recommendations.

On the other hand, poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, treatment errors, and, ultimately, poor health outcomes. In addition, healthcare professionals encounter patients from diverse cultural backgrounds in today's world. The ability to adapt your communication style and take cultural differences into account helps improve the quality of healthcare. Communication competence is an essential aspect of the professional growth of healthcare professionals. It opens up opportunities for career development, as healthcare professionals with strong communication skills are usually more competitive in the job market.

Thus, communicative competence not only increases the efficiency of medical

professionals but also significantly affects treatment outcomes and patient satisfaction.

The components of their communicative competence include:

- verbal skills – the ability to formulate one's thoughts and ideas using clear and accessible language that corresponds to the level of knowledge of the interlocutor;
- non-verbal skills – the ability to understand non-verbal signs (gestures, facial expressions, intonation), using one's non-verbal signals to enhance communication;
- listening – understanding and awareness of what is said, the ability to ask questions and clarify information for better understanding;
- empathy – the ability to relate to the feelings and experiences of other people, to show compassion and support, which is especially important in medical practice;
- cultural competence – understanding and respect for the cultural characteristics and values of different patient groups, the ability to adapt communication strategies according to the cultural context;
- conflict competence – the ability to resolve conflicts and problems that arise in the process of communication, using constructive approaches to achieve mutual understanding;

Critical thinking is the ability to analyse information, evaluate opinions, and make informed decisions.

Together, these components form communicative competence, which is essential for healthcare professionals as it affects the quality of patient care and the effectiveness of teamwork.

Communication between doctors and patients affects many aspects of healthcare. First, clarity in communication helps patients better understand their symptoms and diagnoses, which reduces anxiety and uncertainty. Second, open dialogue helps build trust, essential for successful treatment. Doctors who are good listeners and ask questions can better assess patients' conditions and tailor treatment to their needs.

Effective communication also provides patients with the necessary information about treatment, risks, and possible outcomes, increasing their engagement in the

process. Studies show that patients actively involved in decision-making are more likely to adhere to treatment recommendations. At the same time, poor communication can lead to misunderstandings, treatment errors, and, ultimately, poor health.

Given this, training doctors in communication and active listening skills can be important in improving the quality of medical services.

For effective communication in medical practice, the following methods can be used:

- active listening, during which the doctor asks questions and clarifies the patient's answers to understand their experiences and symptoms;
- using plain language, when the doctor explains medical terms in clear language so that the patient can easily understand their treatment;
- visual materials – using diagrams or pictures to explain procedures or diagnoses, which helps patients remember information better;
- confirmation of understanding, when the doctor asks the patient to repeat the information to make sure that he understood everything correctly;
- regular feedback, as a result of which the doctor clarifies whether the patient has additional questions or concerns, demonstrating care and support.

It is worth noting that the development of communicative competence in medical professionals faces challenges, including:

- Time constraints. In modern medicine, doctors often have limited time to see patients due to high workloads and the need to serve many patients. This can lead to superficial consultations when the doctor does not have the opportunity to listen to the patient in detail or discuss all his problems. Such time constraints reduce the quality of communication and can make patients feel ignored, negatively affecting their trust in the doctor. In addition, insufficient time to explain treatment recommendations can lead to a patient misunderstanding of their condition or treatment, reducing the effectiveness of therapy. In conditions of time shortage, doctors may resort to formulaic phrases and standard answers, which limits the individual approach to the patient. This is especially important in complex or

sensitive issues, where patients may need more attention and support.

Solving this problem requires optimising workflows, implementing new technologies, and changing the healthcare system to enable doctors to communicate more effectively with patients.

- Insufficient preparation. Many medical curricula focus primarily on technical skills, clinical knowledge, and science while developing communication skills often takes a back seat.

This results in doctors not receiving sufficient training in critical areas such as active listening, empathy, managing emotions, and explaining complex medical information. Without proper communication skills, doctors may be unable to adequately explain diagnoses, treatment plans, or risks, making it difficult for patients to understand their condition. This can lead to misunderstanding of recommendations, low adherence to treatment, and ultimately, poorer patient health. Additionally, inadequate training may limit physicians' ability to handle emotionally challenging situations, such as communicating complex diagnoses or discussing hospice care. In such cases, providing support and demonstrating sensitivity is critical to maintaining patient trust.

To overcome this problem, medical education institutions should integrate communication training into their programs, including role-playing, simulations, and other hands-on learning methods. This will help future medical professionals develop the necessary skills to effectively interact with patients, ultimately improving the quality of medical services.

- Stress and burnout. High-stress levels in the medical field can negatively impact doctors' ability to communicate effectively and with empathy.

Doctors and nurses are often exposed to high stress levels in healthcare due to workload, emotional challenges, and responsibility for people's lives. Stress and burnout can make doctors less sensitive and emotionally detached. This negatively affects their ability to communicate effectively with patients. They may be inattentive to the patient's emotional state, miss essential details in a conversation, or not explain information well enough.

To overcome these challenges, it is essential to implement support programs for healthcare professionals, including stress management training, opportunities for rest, and peer support. Creating an open and supportive workplace environment will help healthcare professionals reduce stress levels, improve communication with patients, and ultimately improve the quality of healthcare services.

- Cultural barriers: Differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds among patients can make it challenging to understand each other. Differences in languages can make communication difficult, leading to misunderstandings. Patients who do not speak the doctor's language may not receive accurate instructions or explanations, which can affect their treatment. Different cultures may have other ideas about health, illness, and treatment. For example, some cultures may favour traditional medicine over modern therapies. This can lead to conflicts in the treatment process. In some cultures, doctors are seen as authority figures, and patients may not voice their concerns or questions. This makes open dialogue difficult and can lead to misunderstandings of treatment recommendations. Patients' social status, education, and economic circumstances can also influence their attitudes toward health services, leading to distrust or apprehension about treatment.

To overcome cultural barriers, healthcare institutions should invest in training their doctors that include cultural competence. This can include training that helps doctors understand cultural diversity, develop active listening skills, and adapt communication strategies. It is also essential to involve interpreters in cases of language barriers, as well as create an inclusive environment where patients feel comfortable and can openly discuss their needs and experiences. This will help reduce the risk of misunderstandings and improve healthcare quality.

- Technical aspects: (electronic health records, telemedicine). Although electronic health records greatly facilitate access to information, their use can distract doctors from face-to-face communication with patients. Doctors focused on filling out forms and keeping records may pay less attention to patients, reducing communication quality. The growth of telemedicine has opened up new opportunities for patient care but has also introduced specific challenges. For example, technical

problems, such as poor image or sound quality, can make communication difficult. In addition, some patients may feel uncomfortable communicating via video, limiting their openness.

To overcome the challenges associated with the technical aspects of communication, healthcare institutions should invest in training healthcare professionals in new technologies and effective communication methods. It is also essential to ensure that technology is accessible to all patients so that everyone can receive quality healthcare. Implementing support systems that reduce the burden on doctors and allow them to focus on patients will also be an essential step in improving communication.

Thus, the challenges in developing communication competence in healthcare professionals arise for several reasons. First, the fast pace of work in healthcare, especially in high-load environments, limits the time available for patient communication. Second, traditional medical curricula often emphasise technical skills rather than communication skills, leading to under-training.

In addition, psychological stress and burnout can reduce the emotional availability of doctors, making it difficult for them to empathise. Cultural and linguistic differences in patient groups can make interacting difficult. Technological innovations, although helpful, sometimes distance doctors from personal contact. Thus, complex reasons shape these challenges, and a systemic approach is required to overcome them.

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