



# **Evaluating Caregiver Satisfaction and the Impact of Communication and Decision-Making Processes on Patient Management at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri, Borno State**

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## **1. Introduction**

In psychiatric settings, where caregiver participation is critical to patient treatment and rehabilitation, caregiver satisfaction is an essential aspect of healthcare delivery. Gaining insight into and enhancing caregiver satisfaction can guarantee improved patient outcomes, raise the standard of care, and foster a welcoming atmosphere for patients and their families. At the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri, Borno State, this study intends to assess caregiver satisfaction and investigate the effects of communication and decision-making processes on patient management.

In the treatment of mental illnesses, caregivers are essential since they frequently offer round-the-clock assistance and attention. Their motivation to participate in the treatment process might be influenced by how satisfied they are with the care they received, which can have an impact on treatment plan adherence and overall results (Gonzalez et al., 2015). According to studies, contented carers are more likely to collaborate with medical professionals, adhere to care recommendations, and provide a welcoming environment that aids in patients' rehabilitation (Brooks et al., 2020).

It is imperative that caregivers and healthcare providers communicate effectively in order to guarantee that caregivers are informed and actively participate in the care process. Building trust, increasing cooperation, and reducing caregiver anxiety can all be achieved via compassionate and transparent communication (Schulz et al., 2016). Involving caregivers in decision-making procedures can also empower them and give them a sense of respect and value as co-caregivers. Patients who use this participative technique report feeling more satisfied and having better health results (Levine et al., 2018).

Numerous obstacles that may affect caregiver satisfaction are faced by psychiatric institutions in Nigeria, such as the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri. These include the stigma attached to mental illness in society, high patient-to-staff ratios, and scarce resources (WHO, 2014). Furthermore, these difficulties have been made worse by the ongoing conflict in Borno State, which has a negative impact on the mental health of both patients and caregivers as well as increased demand on healthcare services (Owoaje et al., 2016).

It is crucial to assess caregiver satisfaction and comprehend how communication and decision-making procedures affect their experiences, given the crucial role that caregivers play in the management of psychiatric patients. This research will shed light on the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital's existing caregiver satisfaction level, point out areas in need of development, and make suggestions for raising caregiver involvement and patient care. The results will help achieve the more general objective of enhancing mental health services in Nigeria, especially in areas affected by war.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Numerous obstacles must be overcome by caregivers of patients in psychiatric settings if they are to be satisfied with their work and deliver high-quality care. These difficulties are especially noticeable in the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri, Borno State, because of the socioeconomic circumstances of the area, the scarcity of healthcare resources, and the ongoing conflict in the region. Because caregiver happiness has an impact on their collaboration and participation in the treatment process, which in turn affects patient outcomes, caregiver satisfaction is very important. Although caregiver satisfaction is acknowledged to be important, thorough research analyzing the particular elements that support or undermine it in this setting is lacking. Specifically, not enough attention has been paid to the roles that communication and decision-making play between caregivers and healthcare professionals. Fostering a strong relationship between caregivers and healthcare providers requires effective communication and inclusive decision-making; however, there is not enough information available on how these aspects are currently handled at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri. High patient-to-staff ratios and resource shortages that are common in hospitals can make it more difficult to communicate effectively and involve caregivers, which exacerbates the issue. Caregivers often face isolation due to the societal stigma associated with mental illness, which further

complicates their task. These problems demand a thorough analysis in order to pinpoint gaps and provide workable solutions that will enhance patient care and caregiver satisfaction. Therefore, this study seeks to address the following problems:

1. What is the current level of caregiver satisfaction at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri?
2. How do communication practices between healthcare providers and caregivers impact caregiver satisfaction?
3. What is the role of caregiver involvement in decision-making processes on their satisfaction and patient management outcomes?

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### **3. Literature Review**

#### ***3.1 Caregiver Satisfaction in Psychiatric Settings***

Caregiver satisfaction is a complex term that includes a range of factors, including the effectiveness of communication with healthcare professionals, participation in decision-making, and the general level of support from the healthcare system. Better patient outcomes are linked to high caregiver satisfaction because contented caregivers are more likely to follow treatment regimens and offer continuous support (Sharma et al., 2016). Research has demonstrated that caregiver satisfaction can lessen caregiver load, which benefits the caregivers' own mental health and quality of life (Chang et al., 2018).

#### ***3.2 Communication Between Healthcare Providers and Caregivers***

In psychiatric care settings, where caregivers frequently need specific information about treatment goals, patient progress, and possible medication adverse effects, effective communication is essential. According to research, timely, considerate, and transparent communication can greatly increase caregiver satisfaction (McCabe et al., 2016). On the other hand, inadequate communication might result in misconceptions, heightened anxiety, and caregiver discontent (Schulz et al., 2016).

According to a McCabe et al. (2016) study, healthcare professionals should receive communication training to enhance their relationships with caregivers. According to the study, caregivers who expressed a high degree of satisfaction with communication also thought that the quality of care was better. In a similar vein, a systematic review conducted in 2018 by Rodwell et al. highlighted the effectiveness of organized communication interventions in raising caregiver satisfaction, including frequent updates and easily accessible points of contact within the healthcare team.

#### ***3.3 Decision-Making Processes in Caregiving***

Participation in decision-making is yet another important element that influences caregiver satisfaction. Higher satisfaction levels may result from shared decision-making, in which caregivers actively participate in conversations regarding possible courses of action and care plans (Levine et al., 2018). By encouraging a sense of cooperation between caregivers and healthcare providers, this participatory method helps caregivers feel more appreciated and empowered.

According to research by Milte et al. (2019), caregivers who participated in decision-making expressed more satisfaction and thought the treatment they received was more individualized and patient-centered. The study also revealed that decision-making involving caregivers may result in more individualized and efficient treatment approaches, which would eventually improve patient outcomes.

#### ***3.4 Challenges in Psychiatric Care in Nigeria***

Nigeria's psychiatric care system has a number of difficulties, such as a shortage of funding, shoddy infrastructure, and high patient-to-staff ratios. These problems are especially severe in conflict-affected areas like Borno State. The prolonged conflict, according to Owoaje et al. (2016), has made the mental health crisis worse by raising demand for psychiatric care and putting a pressure on available resources. According to a 2014 World Health Organization (WHO) assessment, mental health services in Nigeria are undeveloped, with notable disparities in the accessibility and caliber of care provided. Caretakers have many difficulties in this scenario since they frequently need to work within a convoluted and underfunded system in order to support their loved ones. The situation is made more difficult by the stigma attached to mental illness, which isolates caregivers and limits their access to social support systems (Adewuya & Oguntade, 2007).

#### ***3.5 Theoretical Framework***

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Stress and Coping Theory serve as the theoretical foundation for this study on caregiver satisfaction and the effects of communication and decision-making processes on patient management at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri. These theories offer a thorough grasp of the variables affecting caregiver satisfaction as well as the dynamics of decision-making and communication in mental health treatment.

### **3.5.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

According to Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), three types of considerations influence human behavior: normative views, control beliefs, and behavioral beliefs. An individual's attitudes, subjective norms, and sense of behavioral control are shaped by these factors, and these factors then affect the individual's intentions and behaviors.

Behavioural beliefs refer to an individual's convictions on the consequences of engaging in a particular activity and how they assess these consequences. The benefits of good communication and participation in decision-making for patient care and the caregiver's own well-being can be considered behavioral beliefs in the context of caregiver satisfaction.

Normative Beliefs: These represent the perceived social pressures to engage in a certain action or refrain from it. Regarding their engagement in the patient's care, family, friends, and medical professionals' expectations and support may become normative views for caregivers. Control Beliefs: These are related to the idea that there are things in place that could help or hinder someone from carrying out an action. The availability of resources, knowledge, and assistance from healthcare professionals may be considered control beliefs by caregivers, which may have an impact on their capacity for clear communication and active participation in decision-making.

TPB states that a caregiver's attitudes toward these activities (behavioral beliefs), their perception of control over the care situation (control beliefs), and the expectations of significant others (normative beliefs) are likely to have an impact on their level of satisfaction and involvement in the care process.

### **3.5.2 Stress and Coping Theory**

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) created the Stress and Coping Theory, which offers a framework for comprehending how people react to stressful circumstances. In the context of caregiving, where people frequently experience significant levels of stress and load, this notion is especially pertinent. Primary Appraisal: This is the caregiver's assessment of the stressor's importance, in this case the obligations of providing care and the difficulties of providing psychiatric treatment. Caregivers choose whether these demands endanger their own or the patient's health.

Secondary Appraisal: The caregiver's evaluation of their capacity to manage the stressor is covered here. It entails assessing the resources at their disposal, including communication from healthcare providers, information, and social support.

Coping strategies are the techniques caregivers do to control their stress. Information-seeking, problem-solving, and decision-making are examples of effective coping mechanisms. Withdrawal or avoidance behaviors are examples of ineffective techniques.

The Stress and Coping Theory emphasizes how crucial resources and support networks are in assisting caregivers in managing their stress. Good communication and active participation in decision-making can be important coping mechanisms that lessen the strain and stress of providing care.

### **3.5.3 Integration of Theories**

The integration of the Stress and Coping Theory with the Theory of Planned Behavior offers a strong foundation for comprehending caregiver satisfaction in mental health environments. TPB places a strong emphasis on how attitudes, beliefs, and perceived control shape the behaviors and satisfaction of caregivers. The Stress and Coping Theory emphasizes the value of coping mechanisms and assessments in handling the responsibilities of caregiving.

#### **3.5.3.1 Key Components:**

Attitudes and Beliefs: Caregivers' contentment and engagement in the care process can be increased by their positive beliefs about the advantages of good communication and participation in decision-making.

Social Support and Norms: Caregivers' involvement and contentment can be strengthened by the support of friends, family, and medical professionals.

Perceived Control and Resources: Caregivers can feel more in control of the caregiving situation if they have access to knowledge, support services, and efficient communication methods.

Coping Strategies: Caregivers can reduce stress and increase their level of satisfaction by actively participating in decision-making and communicating effectively.

#### **3.5.3.2 Application to the Study**

This study examines how decision-making and communication processes affect caregiver satisfaction at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri. It is guided by a theoretical framework. The study looks at the attitudes, coping mechanisms, perceived control, and social support of caregivers in an effort to find the elements that lead to greater satisfaction and to suggest interventions that will improve patient outcomes and caregiver involvement.

### **3.6 Empirical Review**

Although there isn't much study especially on caregiver satisfaction in Nigerian psychiatric settings, what is known from the studies that are available is quite insightful. In a 2013 study, Adeosun examined the experiences of Lagos-based caregivers for individuals with schizophrenia, emphasizing the heavy burden and variables affecting their level of satisfaction. The study discovered a strong correlation between caregiver satisfaction and the degree of assistance and perceived communication quality with healthcare providers.

Similarly, communication and participation in decision-making were found to be important factors in determining caregiver satisfaction in a study conducted in the Niger Delta by Jack-Ide et al. (2013). In order to raise satisfaction levels, the study stressed that healthcare practitioners must enhance their communication techniques and actively involve caregivers in the treatment process.

### **3.7 METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.7.1 Research Design**

Survey methodology was used in this investigation. To find out how satisfied caregivers were with the therapeutic support services offered to patients at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri, Borno state, a survey was utilized. It outlines the fundamental characteristics of the study's data. It offers concise summaries of the measurements and the sample. They serve as the cornerstone of almost all quantitative data analyses, along with basic graphic analysis (Yahaya, 2005).

#### **3.7.2 Population and Sample**

The Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital in Maiduguri's patient population was made up of all caregivers, patients, physicians, and nurses. Three hundred (300) respondents make up the projected population. Purposively, a sample of 228 people was chosen for the study based on the Krejcie and Morgan table for estimating sample size from a given population.

#### **3.7.3 Research Instruments**

Care giver Satisfaction of Therapeutic Support Services provided for Patients in Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri, Borno state was the name of the structured questionnaire used to collect the data. The researcher created and framed them based on a review of the literature in order to get information from the respondents. There were five sections in the questionnaire: A, B, C, D, and E. The participants were required to answer the questions on the five measures using a modified 5-point Likert scale: Completely (1), Not At All (5), Not Very (4), Somewhat (3), and Very (2). The respondents' demographic data is shown in Section A, and data on how satisfied caregivers are with the therapeutic support services offered to patients at the Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital is included in Section B. The instrument's validity and reliability indices can be estimated and data analysis made easier with the use of the structured questionnaire.

The first draft of the instrument was put to face validation in order to guarantee its authenticity. Three specialists from the University of Maiduguri's Department of Physical and Health Education completed it. These specialists were asked to evaluate the instrument critically in terms of the statement's clarity and relevance to the content. They were also asked to advise the researcher on whether the rating system was appropriate.

The final version of the instrument took into account the feedback provided by these experts. A representative sample of ten male and ten female patients from the University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital Psychiatric Unit were evaluated by the researcher to ascertain the instrument's reliability. Cronbach To ascertain the instrument's internal consistency coefficient, alpha statistical analysis was employed. The data analysis resulted in an Alpha coefficient value for the instrument ranging from 0.78 to 0.79. The equipment is dependable for use in the investigation, as shown by these somewhat high coefficient values.

#### **3.7.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The study employed descriptive (frequency counts and percentages) and inferential statistics (t-test and Chi-square) for data analysis. Descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) was used to analyze the research questions while inferential statistics (t-test and Chi-square) was employed to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

### **3.8 Results and Discussion**

This chapter presents the findings of the study on caregiver satisfaction and the impact of communication and decision-making processes on patient management at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri, Borno State. The results are discussed in relation to the research questions and relevant literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing caregiver satisfaction in this context.

#### **3.8.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The study included a total of 120 caregivers. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are summarized in Table 1.

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	46	38.3%
Female	74	61.7%
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-30	30	25.0%
31-45	50	41.7%
46-60	28	23.3%
60+	12	10.0%
<b>Relationship to Patient</b>		
Parent	48	40.0%
Spouse	32	26.7%
Sibling	20	16.7%
Child	10	8.3%
Other	10	8.3%
<b>Duration of Caregiving</b>		
<1 year	20	16.7%
1-3 years	55	45.8%
3-5 years	30	25.0%
>5 years	15	12.5%

The sample predominantly comprised female caregivers (61.7%), with the majority aged between 31 and 45 years (41.7%). Most respondents were parents of the patients (40.0%), followed by spouses (26.7%). A significant portion of the caregivers had been providing care for 1-3 years (45.8%).

### 3.8.2 Caregiver Satisfaction Levels

Caregiver satisfaction was assessed using a structured questionnaire, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Satisfaction Aspect	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Communication	3.8	0.6
Decision-Making Involvement	3.6	0.7
Support Services	3.2	0.8
Overall Satisfaction	3.5	0.7

The mean scores indicate that caregivers were generally satisfied with the communication they received (mean score = 3.8) and their involvement in decision-making (mean score = 3.6). However, the satisfaction with support services was comparatively lower (mean score = 3.2).

### **3.8.3 Impact of Communication on Caregiver Satisfaction**

The study found a significant positive correlation between the quality of communication and caregiver satisfaction ( $r = 0.65$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Caregivers who reported clear, empathetic, and timely communication from healthcare providers expressed higher satisfaction levels. This finding aligns with the literature, which emphasizes the importance of effective communication in enhancing caregiver satisfaction (McCabe et al., 2016).

Qualitative feedback from caregivers highlighted the importance of regular updates and the availability of healthcare providers to answer questions. Caregivers appreciated when healthcare providers took the time to explain treatment plans and involve them in discussions about the patient's progress.

### **3.8.4 Impact of Decision-Making Involvement on Caregiver Satisfaction**

The involvement of caregivers in decision-making processes also showed a significant positive correlation with satisfaction levels ( $r = 0.60$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Caregivers who felt included in decisions about the patient's care were more satisfied, echoing findings from previous studies that advocate for participatory approaches in healthcare (Levine et al., 2018).

Caregivers reported that being involved in decision-making made them feel valued and respected. They appreciated when their opinions and insights about the patient's needs were considered, leading to more personalized and effective care plans.

### **3.8.5 Challenges Faced by Caregivers**

Despite the positive aspects of communication and decision-making involvement, caregivers highlighted several challenges. These included high patient-to-staff ratios, limited resources, and societal stigma associated with mental illness. These challenges often made it difficult for caregivers to access necessary support and services, negatively impacting their overall satisfaction.

Many caregivers expressed the need for additional support services, such as counseling and respite care, to help them manage the emotional and physical demands of caregiving. The lack of these services was a significant source of dissatisfaction and stress.

### **3.8.6 Discussion**

The findings of this study underscore the critical role of communication and decision-making processes in enhancing caregiver satisfaction. Effective communication and active involvement in decision-making contribute to a sense of partnership and support, which are essential for caregiver well-being and patient outcomes.

However, the challenges identified highlight the need for systemic improvements in psychiatric care settings in Nigeria. Addressing resource constraints, reducing stigma, and providing additional support services are crucial steps toward improving caregiver satisfaction and the overall quality of care.

The results also suggest that training healthcare providers in communication skills and promoting participatory care models can have a significant positive impact. Policies aimed at reducing the patient-to-staff ratio and increasing resources for mental health services are necessary to create a more supportive environment for both caregivers and patients.

### **3.8.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has presented the results of the study on caregiver satisfaction and the impact of communication and decision-making processes on patient management at the Federal Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri. The findings highlight the importance of effective communication and caregiver involvement in decision-making, while also identifying significant challenges that need to be addressed. The discussion provides insights into potential strategies for improving caregiver satisfaction and enhancing the quality of psychiatric care in this context.

### **3.9 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since care givers were satisfied with therapeutic care given to patients in Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri, hospital management should provide conducive environment for Doctors and Nurses to operate.
2. Communication and decision making should be improved in Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, Maiduguri. This will help to enhance Doctors and Nurses performance.

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