



Knowledge and Perception on the Nutrition Care Process Among Level 1 Hospital Health Care Workers in the West Coast Area of Zamboanga City

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ABSTRACT:

The examination delves into the comprehension and attitudes of healthcare professionals in Zamboanga City hospitals toward the Nutrition Care Process (NCP), a standardized method for nutritional care. The study seeks to evaluate the understanding and perceptions of the NCP among healthcare professionals while identifying demographic factors influencing these aspects.

Employing a descriptive quantitative correlational design, the study surveyed 108 healthcare workers in varied roles. The results indicated that the overall comprehension of the NCP was deemed "Very Good," with notable discrepancies based on educational attainment, years of experience, and professional roles. Higher educational achievements and lengthier professional experience exhibited positive correlations with improved NCP comprehension, conversely, knowledge gaps were evident amongst individuals with lower educational levels and less experience.

Perceptions of the NCP were generally favorable, particularly concerning the roles of Registered Dietitians and the significance of inter-professional collaboration. Yet, a neutral outlook surfaced in personal acquaintance with the NCP steps, underscoring the need for additional training. Educational attainment continued to play a pivotal role, with individuals holding advanced degrees demonstrating more robust positive perceptions.

The study concludes that focused educational initiatives are imperative to bolster NCP comprehension and perceptions, notably among healthcare workers with lower educational attainment and less experience. Proposed measures encompass the development of role-specific training and continual professional development to ensure all healthcare workers are adequately equipped to proficiently execute the NCP, thereby advancing patient care outcomes.

Keywords: *nutrition care process, knowledge, perception, healthcare workers*

Introduction:

The Nutrition Care Process (NCP) serves as a standardized framework for delivering comprehensive nutritional care within healthcare settings. Its implementation is geared towards enhancing patient outcomes, mitigating instances of malnutrition, and elevating the overall quality of healthcare provision. Notwithstanding its advantageous features, challenges persist in effectually introducing the NCP across diverse regions, including Zamboanga City.

The principal objective of the study is to assess the knowledge and perceptions of the Nutritional Care Process (NCP) among healthcare professionals in Zamboanga City's hospitals. This will be accomplished through the administration of surveys or interviews. The study aims to pinpoint knowledge gaps, comprehend perceptions, and scrutinize the factors influencing NCP implementation. By gaining an understanding of the current knowledge and perception of healthcare workers, the research seeks to identify areas in NCP implementation that require improvement within the designated hospital.

Notably, there is a noticeable lack of localized research specifically dedicated to examining the knowledge and perception of the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) among hospital healthcare workers in Zamboanga City. This scarcity of localized data presents a challenge in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the specific difficulties and opportunities associated with the implementation of NCP protocols within this particular region.

The comprehensive analysis aims to provide guidance for interventions designed to enhance healthcare worker knowledge, address attitudinal barriers and facilitate effective implementation of nutrition care practices in hospital settings. Additionally, the study aims to enhance our understanding of the factors influencing nutrition care practice implementation in Zamboanga City, offering valuable insights for policymakers and healthcare professionals seeking to improve nutritional care in the region, potentially serving as the basis for future research in this field.

What is the Nutrition Care process?

The Nutrition Care Process (NCP) is a structured framework used by nutrition and dietetics professionals to assess, diagnose, treat, and monitor their patients' nutritional status and needs. It consists of four interconnected stages: nutrition assessment, nutrition diagnosis, nutrition intervention, and nutrition monitoring and evaluation.

The process of nutrition assessment initiates with the comprehensive gathering of data about a patient's dietary preferences, anthropometric measurements, medical history, and biochemical markers. Subsequently, the phase of "nutrition diagnosis" is executed, wherein a registered nutritionist dietitian (RND) utilizes standardized terminology to identify dietary deficiencies based on the assessment findings. Following this, a customized strategy is formulated by the Registered Nutritionist Dietitian to address the identified nutrition problems in the phase of Nutrition Intervention. This may encompass dietary adjustments, enteral or parenteral nutrition support, and provision of nutrition education. The final phase encompasses nutrition monitoring and evaluation, during which a registered Nutritionist Dietitian (RND) regularly appraises the patient's progress and adapts the treatment plan as necessary to ensure optimal outcomes.

What is the level of knowledge on the Nutrition Care Process of the Hospital Health care workers?

Healthcare personnel demonstrated a strong understanding of NCP concepts, as evidenced by their high overall knowledge score. Nonetheless, notable differences were noted in several areas. While assessment, diagnosis, and intervention showed potential for development, the general overview and monitoring/evaluation processes exhibited the strongest areas of expertise.

Additionally, variations based on gender were observed. When it came to the overview and screening aspects, female healthcare personnel showed more expertise than their male colleagues. On the other hand, men's healthcare professionals showed a greater comprehension of the NCP processes.

What is the level of Perception on the Nutrition Care Process of the Hospital Health care workers?

The research findings indicated that individuals held a remarkably favorable perception of the valuable contributions made by registered dietitians (RDs) in the successful implementation of Nutrition Care Plans (NCPs). Healthcare professionals underscored the significance of collaborative teamwork among various healthcare providers for the effective execution of NCPs. However, they expressed a neutral stance in terms of their understanding and familiarity with the diverse NCP procedures

Methodology:

The study utilizes a descriptive quantitative correlational design, a non-experimental research approach aimed at examining the interrelations among multiple variables. This method is particularly proficient in forecasting future behavior and elucidating the underlying rationales for specific behaviors. This research design allows for the concurrent evaluation of hospital healthcare workers' knowledge and perceptions (independent variables) related to the nutrition care process (dependent variable) without deliberate manipulation of any variables. It involves the use of quantitative data collection methods, specifically through the dissemination of surveys and self-developed questionnaires among hospital healthcare workers to assess their levels of knowledge and perception.

The study was conducted at a level 1 government hospital situated in the West Coast Area of Zamboanga City. This particular hospital was selected as the research site due to its convenient accessibility and the availability of potential respondents. The participant pool comprised healthcare professionals employed at the hospital, including nurses, physicians, nursing attendants, and other relevant healthcare personnel.

The research employed a purposive sampling technique to address time constraints for data collection and analysis. Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions were utilized to analyze the data, allowing for a comprehensive examination of the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Furthermore, the researchers used weighted mean and standard deviation to thoroughly assess the healthcare workers' understanding and perception of the Nutrition Care Process, along with their demographic profiles. Additionally, correlation analysis using multivariate multiple regression techniques was employed to thoroughly explore the relationships between dependent and independent variables of the respondents.

The researcher utilized human resource management data to select all healthcare workers from a chosen hospital in Zamboanga City. Participants were intentionally selected based on the demographic parameters of the study, leading to an assembly of 108 respondents.

This involved collating data from the hospital's Human Resources department to accurately determine the count of both permanent and job-order healthcare workers. The researcher then proceeded to select a representative subset of participants by personally visiting various departments and units within the hospital, seeking consent to conduct surveys. These surveys were designed to evaluate the hospital healthcare workers' knowledge and perception of the Nutrition Care process.

Results**Knowledge:**

The healthcare workers' overall knowledge score regarding the NCP was 12.07 (SD = 3.53) out of a possible maximum score of 19, which is considered 'Very Good'. This suggests that, on average, the healthcare workers have a very good understanding of the NCP.

Breaking down the knowledge scores into specific dimensions, the 'Overview' dimension had a mean score of 5.52 (SD = 1.18) out of 8, indicating a strong grasp of the general concepts of the NCP among the respondents. The 'Screening' dimension scored an average of 3.24 (SD = 1.36) out of 5, reflecting a good level of knowledge in this area.

When examining the specific steps of the NCP, the 'Assessment' step had the lowest mean score of 0.58 (SD = 0.69) out of 2, suggesting that healthcare workers may have the least knowledge or confidence in this area. The 'Diagnosis' step had a mean score of 1.01 (SD = 0.94) out of 2, indicating a moderate level of knowledge. Similarly, the 'Intervention' step had a mean score of 0.73 (SD = 0.86) out of 2, also reflecting a moderate understanding. Notably, the 'Monitoring/Evaluation' step had a perfect mean score of 1.00 (SD = 0.00) out of 1, indicating that all respondents correctly understood this aspect of the NCP.

Dimensions	Maximum	Minimum	Mean Score	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Overview (8)	8	2	5.52	1.18	
Screening (5)	5	0	3.24	1.36	
NCP Steps					
Assessment (2)	2	0	0.58	0.69	
Diagnosis (2)	2	0	1.01	0.94	
Intervention (2)	2	0	0.73	0.86	
Monitoring/ Evaluation (1)	1	1	1	0	
Overall	19	4	12.07	3.53	Very Good

Table 1. Level of knowledge of the hospital healthcare workers on the Nutrition Care Process

Perception

The study investigated the perceptions of healthcare workers regarding the Nutrition Care Process (NCP). Findings, detailed in Table 2, revealed varying levels of agreement with NCP-related statements.

The assertion "I believe that Registered Dietitians (RDs) play a crucial role in implementing the nutrition care process" garnered the highest mean score of 4.93 (SD = 0.35), signifying strong concordance. This was closely followed by "I believe that collaboration among healthcare professionals is essential for a successful nutrition care process," which obtained a mean score of 4.92 (SD = 0.39), also indicating strong agreement. Another notable high mean score was evident for the statement "I believe a nutritionist dietitian conducts a nutritional assessment and develops/prepares the Nutrition Care Plan (NCP) for the patient," achieving a score of 4.74 (SD = 0.63), reflecting a strong consensus on the critical role of dietitians.

Conversely, the statement "I believe that I am familiar with the different steps of the Nutrition Care Process" recorded the lowest mean score of 2.96 (SD = 0.23), suggesting a neutral stance regarding respondents' familiarity with NCP steps. Similarly, statements such as "I believe that a nutrition diagnosis identifies specific nutrition-related problems that a patient may have" (M = 3.04, SD = 0.36) and "I believe that I have a good understanding of the basic steps of the nutrition care process" (M = 3.28, SD = 0.53) also reflected a neutral perception.

The overall mean perception score across all items was 3.76 (SD = 0.80), indicating a general positive perception of the NCP among hospital healthcare workers. Although there is an overall positive perception, areas related to understanding and familiarity with the process steps may benefit from further education and training.

The study demonstrated strong agreement among healthcare workers on the importance of dietitians and collaboration in the NCP. However, a neutral perception regarding their understanding and familiarity with the different steps of the NCP highlights a potential area for improvement in their training and education.

Table 10. level of Perception of the hospital healthcare workers on the Nutrition Care Process

Perceptions towards NCP	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
1. I believe that I have a good understanding of the basic steps of the nutrition care process."	3.28	0.53	Neither
2. I believe that I am familiar with the different steps of the Nutrition Care Process	2.96	0.23	Neither

3. I believe the main objective of nutrition monitoring and evaluation is to ensure the effectiveness of the plan.	3.82	0.47	Agree
4. I believe that a nutrition diagnosis identifies specific nutrition-related problems that a patient may have.	3.04	0.36	Neither
5. I believe the attending physician should fill out a referral form to request a nutrition care plan from the Dietitian.	3.29	0.53	Neither
6. I believe nurses play a key role in the initial nutrition screening process."	3.31	0.70	Neither
7. I believe that nutrition screening is a crucial first step in the nutrition care process.	3.28	0.53	Neither
8. I believe a nutritionist dietitian conducts a nutritional assessment and develops/prepares the Nutrition Care Plan (NCP) for the patient	4.74	0.63	Strongly Agree
9. I believe that collaboration among healthcare professionals is essential for successful nutrition care process	4.92	0.39	Strongly Agree
10. I believe that Registered Dietitians (RDs) play a crucial role in implementing the nutrition care process.	4.93	0.35	Strongly Agree
Overall	3.76	0.80	Agree

Table 2. Level of knowledge of the hospital healthcare workers on the Nutrition Care Process

Conclusion

This research study delves into the comprehensive assessment of the level of knowledge and perception of the Nutrition Care Process (NCP) among healthcare professionals. The findings of the study indicate a predominantly positive overall perception of the NCP. However, a thorough analysis brings to light the crucial necessity for targeted educational interventions aimed at addressing specific knowledge deficiencies. These interventions are essential to ensure the delivery of optimal and tailored treatment for patients. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need for future research to investigate the correlation between enhanced knowledge of the NCP and improved patient outcomes, as well as the factors influencing knowledge retention.

Furthermore, the results underscore the significance of tailored educational initiatives in elevating healthcare professionals' proficiency in implementing the NCP. While the study portrays a positive perception of the participation and collaboration of Registered Nutritionist Dietitians (RNDs), it also highlights the potential impediment to the provision of optimal patient care posed by the lack of understanding of NCP processes among these professionals.

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