

The Challenges and Needs of Nurses' English Communication: A Case Study in Taipei City Hospital in Taiwan

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ABSTRACT

Due to the fact that the world has become a global village, nurses in Taiwan are faced with increasingly diverse patients from different parts of the world. The growing number of patients from abroad means that the nurses should face international patients with different cultural backgrounds and languages. Since English is the most widely used international language, it has become a popular lingua franca used for communication between Taiwanese nurses and international patients. However, little research has been done on how effectively they communicate with each other in English. Without the proper English communication, it will almost be impossible that international patients get appropriate treatments. Therefore, this study investigated the English language competence of the nurses in Taiwan through questionnaire and video recording. A total of 21 Taiwanese nurses participated in this study. The major findings showed that the nurses rated speaking skill and grammar knowledge as the most important skill for their English usage in the workplace. The findings of video recording also showed that nurses have challenges and strategies in understanding spoken English with international patients such as attempts to use gestures to aid communication with international patients, to use mix words when speaking in English (i.e Code switching), and to escape engaging in small talks or long conversation with international patients in English.

Keywords: nurses, foreign patients, effective communication, nurse-patient relationship