Communication Among Multidisciplinary Team Members Treating Patients with Disorders of Consciousness Following Traumatic Brain Injury

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Research Question

How do clinicians perceive communicating with team members about patients in states of disorders of consciousness (DoC)?

Analysis

Thematic & constant comparative data tools to organize and analyze the data. [4, 6, 7]

Case studies

- Patients with DoC following TBI present unique challenges for clinicians
- Unable to verbally communicate needs
- Uncertainty about prognosis
- Limited indicators of meaningful change [1]

Thematic analysis is iterative, ongoing coding with team members about patients in states of disorders of consciousness (DoC).

Thematic & constant comparative methods [8]

- Line by line open coding
- Examples of codes: 'collaborating with staff', 'creating rapport', 'discrepancy in interpretation', 'refusing admission', 'family talks clinician things'
- Open codes developed into axial codes (i.e., categories) that share a characteristic, pattern, or theme
- Axial codes explicitly describe the open codes
- Examples of axial codes: 'Interpretations of Patient Responses', 'Patient becomes more aware', 'Factors Influencing the Patient’s Recovery', 'Communication between multidisciplinary team members', 'Challenging Conversations with Family'

External Influences

- Health insurance, Economy, Politics

Health Care System

- Medical Model, Lack of care for chronic conditions, care pathways

Organizational Culture

- Mission, Values, Resource Structure, Hierarchy vs. Heterarchy

Rehabilitation Culture

- Cross-disciplinary team members, relationships between & within disciplines, formal & informal communication

Clinicians

- Individual training, philosophy, beliefs, worldview

Family

- Pre-injury relationship with patient & hope for recovery

Person with Disorders of Consciousness

- Etiology, personality, medical history

Discussion

Thematic of Uncertainty

- Fluctuation of behavior is common for this patient population
- Clinicians are uncertain about interpreting patient behaviors; they express frustration with communicating uncertainty to families and other team members.
- Clinical assessments and their interpretations do not provide clarity on prognosis or diagnosis (+/- misconceptions of patient recovery)

The figure shows the multiple factors that can influence clinician communication within this healthcare delivery system.

Future Directions

- New themes will emerge as more data are coded.
- Theme of uncertainty in health will facilitate future clinical trainings on effective communication to facilitate better patient outcomes.
- Currently interviewing caregivers to understand their perceptions of this issue (communication).

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References


Conceptual Framework

- Systems perspective [3, 5]
- Thematic & constant comparative data tools to organize and analyze the data. [4, 6, 7]