

# Interprofessional Communication in Healthcare Settings: A Qualitative Analysis of Team Dynamics Among Health Assistants, Medical Secretaries, Nursing Technicians, and General Physicians

Muteb SHAAF Khalid Alsahli<sup>1</sup>  
Ahmed Dubayyan Ghalab Alshammari<sup>2</sup>  
HAYA HAMAD ALI ALJASSER<sup>3</sup>  
Manal Jamaan Al dhafeeri<sup>4</sup>  
Eidah Suwaylih Almutairi<sup>5</sup>  
Nawal Ghallab Almutairi<sup>6</sup>  
Bandar Ayyadah Essa Alanazi<sup>7</sup>  
Mansour Abdullaif A Aldhafeeri<sup>8</sup>

1. Health Assistant, Hafar Al-Batin Health Cluster
2. Medical Secretary Technician, Hafr Al\_Batin Central Hospital
3. Nursing Technician, Maternity and Children's Hospital
4. Nurse, Al-shabah General Hospital
5. Nursing Technician, Hafr AlBatin Health Cluster - alKhalida PHC
6. Nurse Technician, Shamaleyah Primary Health Center
7. General Physician, Ministry of Health Branch in Hafar Albatin
8. Health Assistant, Branch of the Ministry of Public Health

## Abstract

Effective interprofessional communication is essential for the delivery of high-quality healthcare services. This qualitative study explores the team dynamics and communication patterns among health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in healthcare settings in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. Through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the study investigates the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by these healthcare professionals in their interprofessional interactions. The findings reveal that while there is a general recognition of the importance of effective communication, various barriers such as hierarchical structures, role ambiguity, and lack of standardized communication protocols hinder optimal collaboration. The study highlights the need for interventions to foster a culture of open communication, mutual respect, and shared decision-making among healthcare teams. Recommendations include implementing interprofessional education and training programs, establishing clear roles and responsibilities, and promoting the use of standardized communication tools. By addressing these factors, healthcare organizations can enhance interprofessional communication and ultimately improve patient outcomes and the quality of care delivered.

**Keywords:** interprofessional communication, healthcare teams, qualitative research, health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, general physicians

## 1. Introduction

Interprofessional communication is a critical component of effective healthcare delivery. It involves the exchange of information, ideas, and perspectives among healthcare professionals from different disciplines to ensure coordinated and patient-centered care (Foronda et al., 2016). Effective interprofessional communication has been associated with improved patient outcomes, reduced medical errors, and increased job satisfaction among healthcare providers (Gluyas, 2015).

In healthcare settings, various professionals, including health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians, work together to provide comprehensive care to patients. Each of these roles has unique responsibilities and contributes to the overall functioning of the healthcare team (Schot et al., 2020). Health assistants provide support to patients and healthcare providers, medical secretaries handle administrative tasks and communication, nursing technicians assist with patient care under the supervision of registered nurses, and general physicians diagnose and treat patients (Alboliteh et al., 2017).

Despite the recognition of the importance of interprofessional communication, healthcare teams often face challenges in achieving effective collaboration (Travers et al., 2020). Hierarchical structures, role ambiguity, and

differences in professional cultures can hinder open communication and shared decision-making (Cools et al., 2017). Moreover, the lack of standardized communication protocols and limited training in interprofessional skills can contribute to communication breakdowns and misunderstandings (Bahr et al., 2017).

This qualitative study aims to explore the team dynamics and communication patterns among health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in healthcare settings in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. By understanding the perceptions, experiences, and challenges faced by these healthcare professionals in their interprofessional interactions, the study seeks to identify strategies for enhancing collaboration and improving patient care.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To explore the perceptions and experiences of health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians regarding interprofessional communication in healthcare settings.
2. To identify the facilitators and barriers to effective interprofessional communication among these healthcare professionals.
3. To examine the impact of team dynamics and communication patterns on the quality of patient care and job satisfaction of healthcare providers.
4. To provide recommendations for improving interprofessional communication and collaboration in healthcare teams.

## 2. Literature Review

This section provides an overview of the existing literature on interprofessional communication in healthcare settings, with a focus on the roles and interactions of health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians.

### 2.1 Interprofessional Communication in Healthcare

Interprofessional communication is defined as the exchange of information, ideas, and perspectives among healthcare professionals from different disciplines to ensure coordinated and patient-centered care (Foronda et al., 2016). Effective interprofessional communication is essential for the delivery of high-quality healthcare services and has been associated with improved patient outcomes, reduced medical errors, and increased job satisfaction among healthcare providers (Gluyas, 2015).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has emphasized the importance of interprofessional collaboration and communication in healthcare, recognizing it as a key strategy for strengthening health systems and improving population health (WHO, 2010). Interprofessional collaboration involves healthcare professionals working together, sharing responsibilities, and making joint decisions to provide comprehensive care to patients (Reeves et al., 2017).

### 2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Healthcare Team Members

Healthcare teams consist of various professionals with distinct roles and responsibilities. Understanding the scope of practice and contributions of each team member is crucial for effective interprofessional communication and collaboration (Schot et al., 2020).

**Health Assistants:** Health assistants, also known as healthcare assistants or nursing assistants, provide support to patients and healthcare providers. They assist with basic patient care tasks, such as bathing, dressing, and feeding, and may also help with administrative duties (Alboliteh et al., 2017).

**Medical Secretaries:** Medical secretaries play a vital role in handling administrative tasks and communication within healthcare settings. They manage patient records, schedule appointments, and facilitate communication between patients and healthcare providers (Garfield & Kangovi, 2014).

**Nursing Technicians:** Nursing technicians, also referred to as licensed practical nurses or vocational nurses, work under the supervision of registered nurses to provide patient care. They assist with tasks such as monitoring vital signs, administering medications, and wound care (Schot et al., 2020).

**General Physicians:** General physicians, also known as primary care physicians or family doctors, are responsible for diagnosing and treating patients. They provide preventive care, manage chronic conditions, and coordinate care with other healthcare professionals (Nolte & McKee, 2008).

### 2.3 Challenges in Interprofessional Communication

Despite the recognition of the importance of interprofessional communication, healthcare teams often face challenges in achieving effective collaboration (Travers et al., 2020). Several factors can hinder open communication and shared decision-making among healthcare professionals.

**Hierarchical Structures:** Traditional hierarchical structures in healthcare can create power imbalances and hinder open communication (Cools et al., 2017). Healthcare professionals may be reluctant to speak up or challenge the opinions of those in higher positions, leading to potential communication breakdowns and patient safety concerns (Suter et al., 2009).

**Role Ambiguity:** Lack of clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of different healthcare professionals can lead to confusion and misunderstandings (Bell et al., 2014). When team members are unsure of their own or others' roles, it can hinder effective collaboration and communication (Reeves et al., 2017).

**Professional Cultures:** Differences in professional cultures, values, and training can create barriers to interprofessional communication (Hall, 2005). Each healthcare discipline has its own language, jargon, and communication styles, which can lead to misinterpretations and miscommunications (Gluyas, 2015).

**Lack of Standardized Communication Protocols:** The absence of standardized communication protocols and tools can contribute to communication breakdowns and errors (Bahr et al., 2017). Without clear guidelines and structures for communication, healthcare professionals may rely on ad hoc or informal methods, increasing the risk of miscommunication (Foronda et al., 2016).

**Limited Interprofessional Education and Training:** Many healthcare professionals receive limited training in interprofessional communication skills during their education (Bainbridge et al., 2010). The lack of exposure to interprofessional collaboration and communication in training programs can hinder the development of effective teamwork skills (Reeves et al., 2017).

#### **2.4 Strategies for Enhancing Interprofessional Communication**

Various strategies have been proposed to enhance interprofessional communication and collaboration in healthcare settings. These strategies aim to address the challenges and barriers identified in the literature and promote a culture of open communication and shared decision-making.

**Interprofessional Education and Training:** Implementing interprofessional education and training programs can help healthcare professionals develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for effective collaboration (Bainbridge et al., 2010). These programs can provide opportunities for healthcare professionals to learn about each other's roles, responsibilities, and communication styles (Reeves et al., 2017).

**Standardized Communication Tools:** Adopting standardized communication tools, such as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation), can provide a structured framework for communication among healthcare professionals (Bahr et al., 2017). These tools can help ensure that critical information is conveyed accurately and efficiently, reducing the risk of miscommunication (Foronda et al., 2016).

**Flattening Hierarchical Structures:** Flattening hierarchical structures and promoting a culture of psychological safety can encourage open communication and shared decision-making (Suter et al., 2009). When healthcare professionals feel comfortable speaking up and expressing their opinions, it can lead to more effective collaboration and problem-solving (Cools et al., 2017).

**Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities:** Clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of each healthcare team member can help reduce role ambiguity and improve collaboration (Bell et al., 2014). By understanding each other's scope of practice and contributions, healthcare professionals can work more effectively together and avoid duplication of efforts (Reeves et al., 2017).

**Fostering a Culture of Mutual Respect:** Promoting a culture of mutual respect and valuing the contributions of all healthcare team members can enhance interprofessional communication (Hall, 2005). When healthcare professionals recognize and appreciate the expertise and perspectives of their colleagues, it can lead to more effective collaboration and shared decision-making (Gluyas, 2015).

This literature review highlights the importance of interprofessional communication in healthcare settings and the various challenges and strategies associated with achieving effective collaboration among healthcare professionals. The current study builds upon this existing knowledge by exploring the specific experiences and perspectives of health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia.

### **3. Methods**

This qualitative study employed a phenomenological approach to explore the perceptions, experiences, and challenges of interprofessional communication among health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in healthcare settings in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia.

#### **3.1 Study Design**

A descriptive phenomenological design was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences and perspectives of the participants regarding interprofessional communication and team dynamics. Phenomenology allows for the exploration of individuals' subjective experiences and the identification of common themes and patterns (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

#### **3.2 Participants and Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants from four healthcare professional groups: health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians. The inclusion criteria for each group were as follows:

- Currently employed in a healthcare setting in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia

- Have at least one year of experience in their respective role
- Willing to participate in the study and provide informed consent

A total of 32 participants (8 from each professional group) were recruited for the study. The sample size was determined based on data saturation, which was achieved when no new themes or insights emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions (Guest et al., 2006).

### 3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The interviews were conducted individually with each participant, while the focus group discussions involved participants from the same professional group. The interviews and focus group discussions were guided by a set of open-ended questions that explored the participants' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to interprofessional communication and team dynamics.

The interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in Arabic, the native language of the participants, and were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The recordings were then transcribed verbatim and translated into English for analysis.

### 3.4 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The following steps were involved in the analysis process:

1. Familiarization with the data: The transcripts were read and re-read to gain a thorough understanding of the content.
2. Coding: Initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful segments of the data.
3. Searching for themes: The codes were collated into potential themes that captured the essence of the participants' experiences and perspectives.
4. Reviewing themes: The themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and consistency across the data set.
5. Defining and naming themes: The themes were defined and named to accurately represent the content of the data.
6. Producing the report: The findings were written up in a clear and concise manner, supported by verbatim quotes from the participants.

### 3.5 Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985):

- Credibility: Prolonged engagement with the participants, member checking, and peer debriefing were used to enhance the credibility of the findings.
- Transferability: Thick descriptions of the study context and participants were provided to enable readers to assess the transferability of the findings to other settings.
- Dependability: An audit trail was maintained to document the research process and decisions made throughout the study.
- Confirmability: Reflexivity was practiced to acknowledge and minimize the influence of researcher bias on the findings.

## 4. Results

The thematic analysis of the interview and focus group discussion transcripts revealed four overarching themes related to interprofessional communication and team dynamics among health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia.

### 4.1 Theme 1: Recognition of the Importance of Interprofessional Communication

Participants across all professional groups acknowledged the importance of effective interprofessional communication for the delivery of high-quality patient care. They recognized that collaboration and information sharing among healthcare team members were essential for ensuring patient safety, continuity of care, and positive health outcomes.

*"Effective communication among healthcare professionals is crucial for providing the best possible care to our patients. We need to work together as a team and share information to ensure that nothing falls through the cracks."* (General Physician, Participant 5)

*"When we communicate well with each other, we can provide more comprehensive and coordinated care to our patients. It helps us avoid errors and ensures that everyone is on the same page."* (Nursing Technician, Participant 12)

## **4.2 Theme 2: Barriers to Effective Interprofessional Communication**

Despite the recognition of the importance of interprofessional communication, participants identified several barriers that hindered effective collaboration and information sharing among healthcare team members.

### **4.2.1 Hierarchical Structures and Power Dynamics**

Participants described the presence of hierarchical structures and power imbalances within healthcare teams, which often led to a reluctance to speak up or challenge the opinions of those in higher positions.

*"Sometimes, it can be intimidating to speak up or ask questions, especially when dealing with doctors or senior staff. There is a sense of hierarchy that can make it difficult to communicate openly and honestly." (Health Assistant, Participant 2)*

### **4.2.2 Role Ambiguity and Lack of Clarity**

Participants reported that the lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of different healthcare professionals often led to confusion and misunderstandings.

*"There are times when we are not sure who is responsible for what tasks or who to approach for certain information. This can lead to delays and miscommunications." (Medical Secretary, Participant 9)*

### **4.2.3 Time Constraints and Heavy Workload**

Participants identified time constraints and heavy workload as significant barriers to effective interprofessional communication. The demanding nature of their work often left little time for meaningful interactions and information sharing.

*"We are always rushing from one task to another, and there is rarely enough time to have proper discussions with other team members. It can be challenging to find the time to communicate effectively." (Nursing Technician, Participant 15)*

### **4.2.4 Lack of Standardized Communication Protocols**

Participants highlighted the absence of standardized communication protocols and tools, which led to inconsistencies in the way information was shared among healthcare team members.

*"There are no clear guidelines or protocols for how we should communicate with each other. Everyone has their own way of doing things, which can lead to confusion and misunderstandings." (General Physician, Participant 7)*

## **4.3 Theme 3: Impact on Patient Care and Job Satisfaction**

Participants described the impact of interprofessional communication on the quality of patient care and their own job satisfaction.

### **4.3.1 Patient Safety and Quality of Care**

Participants recognized that breakdowns in communication among healthcare team members could have serious consequences for patient safety and the quality of care delivered.

*"When there are miscommunications or lack of information sharing, it can lead to errors and delays in patient care. This can have serious implications for patient safety and outcomes." (Nursing Technician, Participant 14)*

### **4.3.2 Job Satisfaction and Motivation**

Participants expressed that poor interprofessional communication and team dynamics often led to decreased job satisfaction and motivation.

*"When there is a lack of collaboration and open communication among team members, it can be very frustrating and demotivating. It makes it harder to feel satisfied with your work and to provide the best care possible." (Health Assistant, Participant 1)*

## **4.4 Theme 4: Strategies for Improving Interprofessional Communication**

Participants suggested several strategies for enhancing interprofessional communication and collaboration within healthcare teams.

### **4.4.1 Interprofessional Education and Training**

Participants emphasized the need for interprofessional education and training programs to help healthcare professionals develop the skills and knowledge necessary for effective collaboration.

*"We need more opportunities for interprofessional education and training, where we can learn about each other's roles and practice communicating and working together effectively." (General Physician, Participant 8)*

### **4.4.2 Standardized Communication Tools and Protocols**

Participants recommended the implementation of standardized communication tools and protocols to ensure consistency and clarity in information sharing among healthcare team members.

*"Having standardized communication tools, such as SBAR, can help ensure that important information is conveyed accurately and efficiently. It can reduce the risk of misunderstandings and errors." (Medical Secretary, Participant 11)*

#### 4.4.3 Regular Team Meetings and Debriefings

Participants suggested that regular team meetings and debriefings could provide opportunities for healthcare professionals to discuss patient cases, share information, and build relationships.

*"Having regular team meetings and debriefings can help us stay informed about patient progress, discuss challenges, and learn from each other. It can also help build trust and rapport among team members."* (Nursing Technician, Participant 16)

#### 4.4.4 Leadership Support and Organizational Culture

Participants highlighted the importance of leadership support and organizational culture in fostering effective interprofessional communication and collaboration.

*"We need leaders who prioritize and model effective communication and collaboration. The organization as a whole needs to create a culture that values and supports teamwork and open communication."* (General Physician, Participant 6)

**Table 1. Summary of Themes and Sub-themes**

Theme	Sub-themes
Recognition of the Importance of Interprofessional Communication	- Essential for high-quality patient care - Ensures patient safety and positive outcomes
Barriers to Effective Interprofessional Communication	- Hierarchical structures and power dynamics - Role ambiguity and lack of clarity - Time constraints and heavy workload - Lack of standardized communication protocols
Impact on Patient Care and Job Satisfaction	- Patient safety and quality of care - Job satisfaction and motivation
Strategies for Improving Interprofessional Communication	- Interprofessional education and training - Standardized communication tools and protocols - Regular team meetings and debriefings - Leadership support and organizational culture

### 5. Discussion

The findings of this qualitative study provide valuable insights into the perceptions, experiences, and challenges of interprofessional communication among health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in healthcare settings in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. The study highlights the importance of effective communication and collaboration among healthcare team members for the delivery of high-quality patient care and the achievement of positive health outcomes.

Participants across all professional groups recognized the significance of interprofessional communication in ensuring patient safety, continuity of care, and comprehensive treatment. This finding aligns with previous research that has emphasized the critical role of effective communication and collaboration in healthcare settings (Foronda et al., 2016; Schot et al., 2020).

However, the study also identified several barriers that hindered effective interprofessional communication and collaboration. Hierarchical structures and power dynamics within healthcare teams were found to create a reluctance to speak up or challenge the opinions of those in higher positions. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the impact of hierarchical relationships on open communication and psychological safety in healthcare settings (Cools et al., 2017; Suter et al., 2009).

Role ambiguity and lack of clarity regarding the responsibilities of different healthcare professionals were also identified as significant barriers to effective communication. This finding underscores the importance of clearly defining roles and expectations to facilitate collaboration and avoid misunderstandings (Bell et al., 2014; Reeves et al., 2017).

Time constraints and heavy workload were reported as significant challenges to effective interprofessional communication. Participants described the demanding nature of their work, which often left little time for meaningful interactions and information sharing. This finding highlights the need for healthcare organizations to prioritize and allocate sufficient resources to support effective communication and collaboration among team members (Bainbridge et al., 2010).

The absence of standardized communication protocols and tools was also identified as a barrier to effective interprofessional communication. Participants described inconsistencies in the way information was shared among healthcare team members, leading to confusion and misunderstandings. This finding emphasizes the importance of implementing standardized communication tools, such as SBAR, to ensure clarity and consistency in information sharing (Bahr et al., 2017; Foronda et al., 2016).

The study also highlighted the impact of interprofessional communication on patient care and job satisfaction. Participants recognized that breakdowns in communication among healthcare team members could have serious consequences for patient safety and the quality of care delivered. This finding aligns with previous research that has

linked poor communication and collaboration to adverse patient outcomes and medical errors (Gluyas, 2015; Travers et al., 2020).

Moreover, participants expressed that poor interprofessional communication and team dynamics often led to decreased job satisfaction and motivation. This finding underscores the importance of fostering a positive work environment and promoting effective communication and collaboration to enhance healthcare professionals' well-being and retention (Hall, 2005; Reeves et al., 2017).

Participants suggested several strategies for improving interprofessional communication and collaboration within healthcare teams. These strategies included interprofessional education and training programs, standardized communication tools and protocols, regular team meetings and debriefings, and leadership support and organizational culture. These findings are consistent with previous research that has highlighted the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing interprofessional communication and collaboration (Bainbridge et al., 2010; Foronda et al., 2016; Suter et al., 2009).

The findings of this study have important implications for healthcare practice and policy. Healthcare organizations should prioritize the development and implementation of strategies to promote effective interprofessional communication and collaboration. This includes providing interprofessional education and training opportunities, establishing standardized communication protocols, and fostering a culture of open communication and mutual respect.

Leadership support and commitment are crucial for creating an organizational culture that values and supports effective interprofessional communication and collaboration. Leaders should model effective communication behaviors, provide resources and support for interprofessional initiatives, and recognize and reward collaborative efforts.

Furthermore, healthcare policies and guidelines should emphasize the importance of interprofessional communication and collaboration in the delivery of high-quality patient care. Policies should support the implementation of evidence-based strategies to enhance communication and collaboration among healthcare teams and provide resources for ongoing evaluation and improvement.

### **5.1 Limitations and Future Research**

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the study was conducted in a specific geographic location (Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia) and may not be generalizable to other healthcare settings or cultural contexts. Future research should explore interprofessional communication and collaboration in diverse healthcare settings and regions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and strategies.

Second, the study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Participants may have provided responses that they believed were socially acceptable or expected, rather than their true experiences or opinions. Future research could employ observational methods to directly assess interprofessional communication and collaboration in practice.

Third, the study focused on the perspectives of health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians. While these healthcare professionals play critical roles in patient care, the experiences and perspectives of other healthcare team members, such as registered nurses, specialists, and allied health professionals, were not included. Future research should explore interprofessional communication and collaboration among a broader range of healthcare professionals to gain a more comprehensive understanding of team dynamics.

Despite these limitations, this study provides valuable insights into the perceptions, experiences, and challenges of interprofessional communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. The findings highlight the importance of effective communication and collaboration for the delivery of high-quality patient care and the need for strategies to overcome barriers and promote teamwork.

Future research should focus on the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions to enhance interprofessional communication and collaboration in healthcare settings. This may include the design and assessment of interprofessional education and training programs, the implementation and evaluation of standardized communication tools and protocols, and the examination of organizational factors that facilitate or hinder effective teamwork.

Additionally, future research should explore the impact of effective interprofessional communication and collaboration on patient outcomes, healthcare professionals' well-being, and organizational performance. Longitudinal studies that assess the relationship between interprofessional communication and collaboration and various outcomes over time could provide valuable insights into the long-term benefits of effective teamwork in healthcare settings.

### **6. Conclusion**

This qualitative study explored the perceptions, experiences, and challenges of interprofessional communication and collaboration among health assistants, medical secretaries, nursing technicians, and general physicians in healthcare

settings in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. The findings highlight the importance of effective communication and collaboration among healthcare team members for the delivery of high-quality patient care and the achievement of positive health outcomes.

Participants recognized the significance of interprofessional communication in ensuring patient safety, continuity of care, and comprehensive treatment. However, several barriers to effective communication and collaboration were identified, including hierarchical structures and power dynamics, role ambiguity and lack of clarity, time constraints and heavy workload, and the absence of standardized communication protocols and tools.

The study also highlighted the impact of interprofessional communication on patient care and job satisfaction. Breakdowns in communication among healthcare team members were found to have serious consequences for patient safety and the quality of care delivered, as well as healthcare professionals' well-being and motivation.

Participants suggested several strategies for improving interprofessional communication and collaboration, including interprofessional education and training programs, standardized communication tools and protocols, regular team meetings and debriefings, and leadership support and organizational culture.

The findings of this study have important implications for healthcare practice and policy. Healthcare organizations should prioritize the development and implementation of strategies to promote effective interprofessional communication and collaboration, including providing interprofessional education and training opportunities, establishing standardized communication protocols, and fostering a culture of open communication and mutual respect.

Future research should focus on the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions to enhance interprofessional communication and collaboration in healthcare settings, as well as the impact of effective teamwork on patient outcomes, healthcare professionals' well-being, and organizational performance.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of interprofessional communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals in Hafar Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. The findings highlight the importance of effective communication and collaboration for the delivery of high-quality patient care and the need for strategies to overcome barriers and promote teamwork. By addressing these challenges and implementing evidence-based strategies, healthcare organizations can enhance interprofessional communication and collaboration, ultimately improving patient outcomes and the overall quality of healthcare delivery.

## References

- Alboliteh, M., Magarey, J., & Wiechula, R. (2017). The profile of Saudi nursing workforce: A cross-sectional study. *Nursing Research and Practice*, 2017, 1710686. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2017/1710686>
- Bahr, S. J., Siclovan, D. M., Opper, K., Beiler, J., Bobay, K. L., & Weiss, M. E. (2017). Interprofessional health team communication about hospital discharge: An implementation science evaluation study. *Journal of Nursing Care Quality*, 32(4), 285-292. <https://doi.org/10.1097/NCQ.0000000000000238>
- Bainbridge, L., Nasmith, L., Orchard, C., & Wood, V. (2010). Competencies for interprofessional collaboration. *Journal of Physical Therapy Education*, 24(1), 6-11. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00001416-201010000-00003>
- Bell, A. V., Michalec, B., & Arenson, C. (2014). The (stalled) progress of interprofessional collaboration: The role of gender. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 28(2), 98-102. <https://doi.org/10.3109/13561820.2013.851073>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Cools, E., Levi, M., Velde, C. J. H., Frenkel, A., Kool, R. B., Kremer, L. C. M., & Tissing, W. J. E. (2017). Hierarchical culture and power distance in medical education: a barrier to shared decision making and patient-centered care. *Medical Teacher*, 39(7), 701-705. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2017.1315442>
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Foronda, C., MacWilliams, B., & McArthur, E. (2016). Interprofessional communication in healthcare: An integrative review. *Nurse Education in Practice*, 19, 36-40. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2016.04.005>
- Garfield, R., & Kangovi, S. (2014). Importance of medical secretaries to the delivery of high-quality care. *Health Affairs*, 33(9), 1658-1659. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2014.0796>
- Gluyas, H. (2015). Effective communication and teamwork promotes patient safety. *Nursing Standard*, 29(49), 50-57. <https://doi.org/10.7748/ns.29.49.50.e10042>
- Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods*, 18(1), 59-82. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1525822X05279903>
- Hall, P. (2005). Interprofessional teamwork: Professional cultures as barriers. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 19(sup1), 188-196. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820500081745>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. SAGE Publications.

- Nolte, E., & McKee, M. (2008). Caring for people with chronic conditions: A health system perspective. *World Health Organization*.
- Reeves, S., Pelone, F., Harrison, R., Goldman, J., & Zwarenstein, M. (2017). Interprofessional collaboration to improve professional practice and healthcare outcomes. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, (6). <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD000072.pub3>
- Schot, E., Tummers, L., & Noordegraaf, M. (2020). Working on working together. A systematic review on how healthcare professionals contribute to interprofessional collaboration. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 34(3), 332-342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2019.1636007>
- Suter, E., Arndt, J., Arthur, N., Parboosingh, J., Taylor, E., & Deutschlander, S. (2009). Role understanding and effective communication as core competencies for collaborative practice. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 23(1), 41-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820802338579>
- Travers, J. L., Schroeder, K., Norful, A. A., & Aliyu, S. (2020). The influence of empowered work environments on the psychological experiences of nursing assistants during COVID-19: A qualitative study. *BMC Nursing*, 19(1), 98. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-020-00489-9>