

Integrating Healthcare Assistants into Holistic Nursing Practices to Enhance Patient-Centered Care

Eman Saleh Alaradi¹, Najla Obaid Mohamd Alharbi², Jameela Duayj Awadh Alotibi³, Abdulrahman Faihan Mulayh Almutairi⁴, Nawal Mutlag Gareeb Aldhafeeri⁵, Mardha Farhan Ayad Alshammari⁶, Sami Fadhel Owaid Alshamari⁷, Sahar Dubays Mohammed Alowayyidh⁸

1 Nursing, PHC_Almithalath, Tabuk

2 Nursing, Maternity and children hospital, Alqassim

3 Nursing, Sajer General Hospital, Sajer

4 Nursing, Health Gathering, Qassim

5 Nursing, Qurtuba PHC, Riyadh

6 Health Assistant, Northern Border Community Health, Rafha

7 Health Assistant, Northern Border Community Health, Rafha

8 Nursing, Ministry of Health Branch, Najran

Abstract:

Holistic nursing emphasizes addressing the multifaceted needs of patients, including physical, emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. However, the increasing complexity of healthcare, coupled with nurse shortages and increasing patient demands, underscores the need to integrate healthcare assistants into nursing teams. Healthcare assistants provide essential support to nurses by managing non-clinical tasks such as personal hygiene, mobility, and patient comfort, freeing nurses to focus on clinical nursing tasks. This collaboration improves quality of care, enhances patient satisfaction, and reduces nurse burnout. The integration of healthcare assistants into holistic nursing practices also promotes effective collaboration between disciplines, ensuring that care plans are customized to the individual patient's needs. Furthermore, the use of technological technologies, such as electronic health records, wearable devices, and predictive analytics, improves care delivery, enhances communication, and supports proactive interventions. The integration of healthcare assistants into holistic nursing practices is a sustainable solution to meet the growing demands of modern healthcare while ensuring comprehensive, patient-centered care. Accordingly, this review explores the role of healthcare assistants in comprehensive nursing practice and their impact on patient outcomes and healthcare systems.

Keywords: Holistic Nursing, Healthcare Assistants, Patient-Centered Care, Collaborative Care, Technology Integration, Ethical Considerations, Interdisciplinary Collaboration.

Introduction:

Modern healthcare requires a comprehensive, patient-centered approach to achieve healthy outcomes for patients and meet their multiple and complex needs [1]. In nursing care, holistic nursing is a patient-centered approach through nursing practices that address all the physical, emotional, psychological and social needs of patients. The holistic nursing approach aims to address all aspects and provide all nursing care services without focusing on one aspect or a specific disease [2].

However, the increasing demand for nursing care, the multiple needs of patients and the shortage of nurses are increasing the burden on nurses in modern healthcare [3]. Therefore, the importance of integrating health assistants into nursing teams is increasing to enhance the delivery of Holistic care. In healthcare, healthcare assistants provide essential support to nurses and provide direct support to patients such as mobility, personal hygiene, and ensuring patient comfort and safety [4]. Therefore, healthcare assistants enhance nurses' ability to perform clinical nursing tasks, which contributes to improving the overall efficiency of patient care [5].

Effective collaboration between nurses and healthcare assistants promotes a more personalized and responsive therapeutic care environment. Long-term relationships between healthcare assistants and patients build a supportive and trusting relationship that allows for understanding patient behaviors and needs, noticing subtle changes in patients' condition, early detection of potential health problems, and providing emotional support, all of which contribute to enhancing patient well-being [6]. Integrating healthcare assistants into Holistic nursing practices also helps address the social and cultural needs of patients, ensuring that nursing care is culturally compatible and consistent with the values and beliefs of patients and their families [7]. Furthermore, including healthcare assistants in healthcare teams can reduce nurses' workload, reduce burnout, and enhance job satisfaction. A well-coordinated team where healthcare assistants and nurses collaborate effectively results in a more supportive work environment, which directly impacts the quality of patient care [8]. However, integration requires clear role definitions, Holistic training, and open communication channels between nurses and healthcare assistants. This promotes effective collaboration between nurses and healthcare assistants in achieving patient-centered healthcare [9].

In this review, we explore how the integration of healthcare assistants into Holistic Nursing Practices to Enhance Patient-Centered Care.

The Role of Nurses in Holistic Care Delivery

In healthcare systems, nurses are on the front lines of patient care. Nurses play a critical role in providing Holistic Care Delivery, patient-centered care that meets clinical needs and provides psychosocial, emotional, and social support to nurses, which contributes to improved patient outcomes and overall health [10].

In Holistic Care Delivery, nurses assume a wide range of responsibilities, including:

- **Physical care:** Nurses perform clinical practices that address the physical needs of patients, such as cannulation, nursing care, vital signs monitoring, and disease management [11].
- **Emotional support and spiritual guidance:** Nurses have a strong, trusting relationship with patients, which enables them to provide emotional and psychological support and empathetic listening to patients. Nurses also consider cultural differences, values, and beliefs in nursing practices, which enhances the psychological aspects of patients [12].
- **Health education:** In addition to clinical practice, nurses play an important role in educating patients about health status, adherence to treatments, the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, and promoting preventive care, which contributes to improving patients' quality of life and improving treatment outcomes [9].

However, nurses face challenges in providing Holistic health care, such as inadequate nurses with increasing demands for nursing care and patient expectations, which increases workload, reduces quality of care, and leads to burnout and turnover. This requires adopting strategies that enhance the role of nurses in providing Holistic care through cooperation with health care assistants in performing non-clinical tasks, continuous professional development for nurses, providing psychological and emotional support for nurses, and having enough nurses to meet the increasing needs of patients [13].

The Role of Healthcare Assistants as Contributors to Holistic Nursing

The role of healthcare assistants in healthcare is highlighted by providing support to nurses and providing Holistic nursing care. Healthcare assistants also contribute to effective coordination between multidisciplinary teams. In addition, the ability of healthcare assistants to meet the physical, emotional and psychological needs of patients contributes to enhancing patient well-being and achieving patient-centered care [14].

- **Physical Care and Support:** The primary roles of healthcare assistants are to provide assistance to patients and meet their physical needs such as personal hygiene, mobility, and nutrition, which enhances patients' well-being. These interventions enhance healthcare assistants' ability to accurately track changes in patients' condition, allowing for early

intervention and improving the overall quality of care. Healthcare assistants' roles also enhance nurses' ability to perform clinical tasks and interventions and reduce nurses' workload [15].

- **Emotional and Psychological Support:** Direct communication between healthcare assistants and patients contributes to the establishment of a trusting relationship that enhances healthcare assistants' ability to provide emotional and psychological support to patients, providing reassurance and reducing feelings of fear, loneliness, or anxiety. This emotional connection contributes to a therapeutic environment that promotes recovery and enhances the overall patient experience [16].
- **Enhancing Communication and Coordination:** Healthcare assistants help facilitate communication between patients, nurses, and healthcare professionals. This role enhances communication within the multidisciplinary team, ensuring that care plans are informed by comprehensive, up-to-date patient information [17].
- **Supporting Spiritual Well-Being:** In holistic nursing, spiritual well-being is recognized as an integral aspect of patient care. Healthcare assistants often engage with patients on a personal level, respecting their spiritual beliefs and practices. Healthcare assistants contribute to a sense of peace and fulfillment for patients, particularly those facing chronic illnesses or end-of-life situations [16].
- **Promote Patient-Centered Care:** Healthcare assistants play an active role in providing patient-centered care by addressing the diverse and individual needs of each patient. Their holistic approach ensures that care plans are tailored to the whole person rather than focusing solely on medical conditions [2].
- **Promote Teamwork and Reduce Nurse Burnout:** Collaboration between healthcare assistants and nurses significantly reduces the workload on nursing staff, reducing burnout and improving job satisfaction. Healthcare assistants' interventions and roles also enhance nurses' ability to make medical decisions and provide nursing care. This teamwork fosters a cohesive and supportive healthcare environment [18].
- **Leveraging Technology in Holistic Nursing:** Healthcare assistants are increasingly involved in using technology to improve patient care. From electronic health records to telemedicine platforms, their role includes helping patients access technology-enabled care solutions, ensuring accessibility and convenience. Their knowledge of patients' routines and conditions allows them to efficiently integrate these tools into their holistic care practices, improving nursing efficiency and patient outcomes [19].

Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Patient-Centered Care

In the modern healthcare landscape, effective collaboration between multidisciplinary teams, especially between nurses and healthcare assistants, is increasingly important to achieve patient-centered care. Holistic nursing care requires effective collaboration between healthcare assistants and nurses to meet the multiple needs of patients including physical, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the patient. Nurses contribute their clinical expertise, assessment, and diagnosis to patients [13]. In addition, coordinating effective communication between patients and healthcare professionals, which improves treatment plans and patient outcomes. Healthcare assistants contribute to providing ongoing support to patients in daily activities such as personal hygiene, mobility, nutrition, monitoring patient condition, and providing psychological and emotional support, allowing nurses to focus on clinical tasks and making treatment decisions [20]. Therefore, understanding and defining the roles of both nurses and healthcare assistants enhances healthcare efficiency and ensures that nursing services are provided that meet all patient needs. Studies show that effective collaboration reduces patient complications, speeds recovery, and enhances overall patient satisfaction. The integration of healthcare assistants and nurses has also contributed to improved chronic disease management and better adherence to care protocols [21]. Furthermore, communication

between interdisciplinary teams enhances trust between healthcare providers and patients, making care more personalized and comprehensive [22]. However, role ambiguity, communication barriers, and lack of cross-training may hinder collaboration between nurses and healthcare assistants in achieving comprehensive, patient-centered nursing care. Therefore, strategies such as regular interdisciplinary meetings, clear role definitions, and cross-training programs that promote mutual understanding and respect should be adopted to promote comprehensive, patient-centered nursing care, improve patient health outcomes, and enhance the well-being of patients, nurses, and healthcare assistants [23].

Continuing Professional Development and Training for Healthcare Assistants and Nurses

The modern healthcare landscape is characterized by many transformations that require nurses and healthcare assistants to keep up with. Therefore, continuous professional development and training contribute to enhancing the ability of nurses and healthcare assistants to stay up to date with best nursing practices and technological advances, which leads to improved patient outcomes and a Holistic nursing approach. Continuing professional development and training programs for nurses focus on developing and enhancing clinical nursing skills and leadership tasks, especially in times of health crises and emergencies [24]. In turn, they contribute to supporting healthcare assistants in their communication skills with patients and coordination between patients, nurses and healthcare professionals, which contributes to achieving a Holistic nursing care approach that focuses on the patient [25].

Interdisciplinary training contributes to enhancing collaborative and teamwork, clarifying roles, improving effective communication, and improving patient outcomes. In addition, continuing education opportunities, such as workshops and seminars, allow nurses and healthcare assistants to continuously improve their skills and adapt to the evolving healthcare landscape and adopt modern technological tools [26].

Technology Integration in Holistic Care

Technology has transformed the healthcare landscape. Technology has enabled comprehensive, patient-centered care. Technological tools such as electronic health records and remote monitoring systems provide instant access to patient data, supporting evidence-based clinical decision-making and enhancing the resilience and sustainability of healthcare systems. Additionally, technology simplifies daily tasks and improving patient interactions. Tools such as mobile apps for scheduling and task tracking, as well as assistive devices such as smart beds, are improving patient care. They also allow healthcare assistants to focus more on personalizing care and ensuring patient comfort [27].

Technology also helps foster effective collaboration between nurses and healthcare assistants to achieve Holistic nursing care by bridging gaps in communication and coordination. Shared digital platforms enable effective communication, allowing healthcare assistants to document patient observations directly in electronic health records, which nurses can review in real-time [28]. This ensures immediate reporting of changes in patient condition, leading to real-time nursing interventions. Additionally, digital task assignment tools simplify workflow management. These tools help nurses effectively delegate tasks to healthcare assistants while maintaining visibility into overall care progress [27].

Several technological advancements have significantly impacted how nurses and healthcare assistants deliver holistic care [29]:

- **Electronic Health Records (EHRs):** Centralized digital records improve accessibility to patient information, enabling better care coordination.
- **Telemedicine Platforms:** Provide nurses with the ability to monitor and consult patients remotely, extending care to underserved populations.
- **Wearable Devices:** Track vital signs and physical activity in real-time, offering actionable insights into patient health for both nurses and healthcare assistants.

- **Smart Beds and Assistive Equipment:** Enhance patient mobility and reduce the physical strain on healthcare assistants during care tasks.
- **Mobile Applications:** Facilitate efficient scheduling and communication between nurses and healthcare assistants, optimizing teamwork.

Impact on Patient Outcomes and Healthcare Systems

Integrating healthcare assistants into a Holistic nursing approach improves patient outcomes and the efficiency of healthcare systems [13,30].

- **Improved patient satisfaction:** Effective integration of healthcare assistants into a Holistic nursing approach enhances the patient experience. Healthcare assistants' interventions and roles contribute to improved patient comfort and ongoing support for patients and nurses.
- **Improved health outcomes:** Collaboration between healthcare assistants and nurses leads to improved patient outcomes, faster recovery times, and fewer hospital readmissions. Additionally, incorporating healthcare assistants into care teams has been linked to better chronic disease management, as they assist nurses in monitoring patient conditions and ensuring adherence to care plans.
- **Operational efficiency:** Incorporating healthcare assistants into a Holistic nursing approach improves workflow. Their involvement allows nurses to focus on more complex clinical tasks, reducing nurses' burnout and improving job satisfaction. This strategic allocation of responsibilities leads to more efficient use of resources and enhances the overall effectiveness of healthcare delivery.

Ethical Considerations in Holistic Nursing Practices

The holistic nursing approach seeks to provide patient-centered care, requiring nurses and healthcare assistants to address a variety of ethical considerations to provide compassionate, patient-centered care [13,31].

- **Respecting Patient Autonomy:** The essence of holistic nursing is to respect each patient's right to make informed decisions about their care. Nurses must ensure that patients understand their treatment options and support them in making choices that are consistent with their values and beliefs. This approach fosters trust and empowers patients on their healing journey.
- **Maintaining Professional Boundaries:** Nurses must establish and maintain professional boundaries to prevent conflicts of interest and ensure objective care. This balance is critical in holistic nursing, where deep emotional bonds can occur. Clear boundaries protect both the nurse and the patient, ensuring that the focus remains on the patient's well-being.
- **Ensuring Cultural Competence:** Holistic nursing requires sensitivity to the diverse cultural backgrounds of patients. Nurses must be aware of their own cultural biases and seek to understand and respect patients' cultural beliefs and practices.
- **Integrating Complementary Therapies:** Holistic nursing often involves integrating complementary therapies alongside conventional therapies. Nurses must integrate these therapies, ensuring that they are evidence-based, safe, and consistent with patient preferences and informed consent.
- **Confidentiality and Privacy:** Protecting patient confidentiality is a fundamental ethical principle in nursing. Nurses must protect the confidentiality of patient data, sharing it only with authorized individuals, and ensuring that all communications respect patient privacy. This practice builds trust and preserves patient dignity.
- **Engaging in Ongoing Ethical Reflection:** Holistic nurses are encouraged to engage in ongoing ethical reflection to navigate complex situations effectively. This practice involves critically analyzing ethical dilemmas, seeking guidance when necessary, and seeking to align actions with professional ethical standards.

Future Prospects for Holistic Nursing Integration

The integration of healthcare assistants into Holistic nursing is poised for significant advances through scalability, technological innovation, and global applications.

- **Scaling Integration Across Healthcare Settings**

Holistic nursing integration can adapt to diverse settings, such as acute care hospitals, long-term care facilities, and community health programs. Healthcare assistants can relieve nurses' workload by focusing on non-clinical care in hospitals, enhancing hospice care in long-term settings, and supporting preventive health initiatives in communities. Uniform training and policies are essential to ensure consistency and effectiveness across settings [13].

- **Integrating Digital Technologies**

Digital technologies such as artificial intelligence, wearables, and predictive analytics are transforming Holistic care. AI enables early risk identification, while wearables provide real-time patient data for proactive interventions. Predictive analytics supports personalized care plans, and virtual reality enhances healthcare assistant training. These tools enhance decision-making and improve patient outcomes [32].

- **Global Impacts**

Globally, healthcare assistants can address workforce shortages and improve access to care in resource-limited areas. Supporting health education and preventive care helps reduce systemic burdens while promoting equitable health outcomes [33].

Conclusion

Integrating healthcare assistants into Holistic nursing practices is a transformative approach to modern healthcare, addressing the complexity of patient needs while easing systemic burdens on nursing teams. This partnership fosters a supportive environment where nurses and healthcare assistants collaborate to deliver comprehensive, patient-centered care. The inclusion of emerging technologies amplifies the potential of this model by enhancing communication, monitoring, and decision-making. As healthcare systems evolve, integration improves patient outcomes and enhances the resilience and sustainability of healthcare systems.

References:

1. Alshammri, A., et al. "The impact of patient-centered care at work: make a difference to the patient experience." *International Journal for Scientific Research* 1.2 (2022): 171-187.
2. Alshehri, Salha Mohammed Abdulrahman, et al. "The Role of Nursing in Promoting Patient-Centered Care." *Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences* 9.4 (2022): 12-14.
3. Maré, M., et al. "A nursing shortage—a prospect of global and local policies." *International nursing review* 66.1 (2019): 9-16.
4. Griffiths, Peter, et al. "Nurse staffing, nursing assistants and hospital mortality: retrospective longitudinal cohort study." *BMJ quality & safety* 28.8 (2019): 609-617.
5. Campbell, Amy Richmond, et al. "Interventions to promote teamwork, delegation and communication among registered nurses and nursing assistants: An integrative review." *Journal of Nursing Management* 28.7 (2020): 1465-1472.
6. Arnold, Elizabeth C., and Kathleen Underman Boggs. *Interpersonal relationships e-book: professional communication skills for nurses*. Elsevier Health Sciences, 2019.
7. Sessanna, Lorelee, Yvonne D. Askew, and Sherry H. Pomeroy. "Faith community nursing practice and holistic nursing practice: A comprehensive and inclusive comparison of both specialties." *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 39.1 (2021): 85-102.
8. Manyang, Christina, et al. "A Balancing Act: Managing Workload while improving nurse and patient satisfaction." *Gastroenterology Nursing* 43.4 (2020): 298-302.
9. Flaubert, Jennifer Lalitha, et al. "The Role of Nurses in Improving Health Care Access and Quality." *The Future of Nursing 2020-2030: Charting a Path to Achieve Health Equity*. National Academies Press (US), 2021.

10. Al Munajjam, Mahdi Fares Mohammed, et al. "Enhancing Patient Care: The Integral Role Of Nurses In Medical Hospital Settings. An Update." *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture* 38 (2023): 1798-1809.
11. Alghamdi, Najd Saeed Ambark, et al. "Unsung Heroes: The Essential Work Of Medical Nurses In Healthcare." *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture* 39 (2023): 40-50.
12. Alotaibi, Maher Sajdi, et al. "The Effect Of Effective Nurse-Patient Communication On Healthcare Quality." *Journal of Namibian Studies: History Politics Culture* 32 (2022): 1233-1246.
13. Morton, Patricia Gonce, and Paul Thurman. *Critical care nursing: a holistic approach*. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2023.
14. Carroll, Rachael. "Health Care Assistant-Registered Nurse dyads: A new concept of nursing team." (2020).
15. Conyard, Karl F., et al. *Healthcare Assistants and Qualified Carers, A Trained, but Untapped Underutilised Resource: A population-based study in Ireland of skillset, career satisfaction, wellbeing and change across all sectors and care settings*. UCD CSTAR & HCA & Carers Ireland, 2020.
16. Griffiths, Peter, et al. "The association between patient safety outcomes and nurse/healthcare assistant skill mix and staffing levels and factors that may influence staffing requirements." (2014).
17. Anderson, Rebecca J., et al. "Communication between healthcare professionals and relatives of patients approaching the end-of-life: A systematic review of qualitative evidence." *Palliative medicine* 33.8 (2019): 926-941.
18. Hellin Gil, Maria Fuensanta, et al. "Relationship between job satisfaction and workload of nurses in adult inpatient units." *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 19.18 (2022): 11701.
19. Senbekov, Maksut, et al. "The recent progress and applications of digital technologies in healthcare: a review." *International journal of telemedicine and applications* 2020.1 (2020): 8830200.
20. Tulskey, James A., et al. "A research agenda for communication between health care professionals and patients living with serious illness." *JAMA internal medicine* 177.9 (2017): 1361-1366.
21. Pelone, Ferruccio, et al. "Interprofessional collaboration to improve professional practice and healthcare outcomes." *Cochrane database of systematic reviews* 6 (2017).
22. Drossman, Douglas A., et al. "A review of the evidence and recommendations on communication skills and the patient-provider relationship: a Rome foundation working team report." *Gastroenterology* 161.5 (2021): 1670-1688.
23. Philip, Neena S. *Exploring holistic nurse manager roles with new patient satisfaction dimensions and expectations*. University of Phoenix, 2014.
24. King, Rachel, et al. "Factors that optimise the impact of continuing professional development in nursing: A rapid evidence review." *Nurse education today* 98 (2021): 104652.
25. Van Servellen, Gwen. *Communication skills for the health care professional: Concepts, practice, and evidence*. Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2009.
26. Walker, Jennifer, and Brandon Hirsch. "Promoting interdisciplinary communication as a vital function of effective teamwork to positively impact patient outcomes, satisfaction, and employee engagement." *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences* 51.4 (2020): S107-S111.

27. Dawson, Joshua Jared. *Leveraging Smart Home Technology in Patient Rooms to Improve the Patient and Healthcare Worker Experience*. Diss. The University of Utah, 2024.
28. Al Mansour, Hadi Hamad Hadi, et al. "Health Assistants and Technology: Navigating Digital Health Tools for Better Patient Engagement with Nursing in Emergency Department." *Journal of International Crisis and Risk Communication Research* (2024): 773-787.
29. Ronquillo, Charlene Esteban, et al. "Artificial intelligence in nursing: Priorities and opportunities from an international invitational think-tank of the Nursing and Artificial Intelligence Leadership Collaborative." *Journal of advanced nursing* 77.9 (2021): 3707-3717.
30. Mandal, Lata, Avudaiappan Seethalakshmi, and Anitha Rajendrababu. "Rationing of nursing care, a deviation from holistic nursing: A systematic review." *Nursing Philosophy* 21.1 (2020): e12257.
31. Haahr, Anita, et al. "Nurses experiences of ethical dilemmas: A review." *Nursing ethics* 27.1 (2020): 258-272.
32. Rath, Kali Charan, et al. "Artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled technology in medicine-advancing holistic healthcare monitoring and control systems." *Computer Vision and AI-Integrated IoT Technologies in the Medical Ecosystem*. CRC Press, 2024. 87-108.
33. Al-Worafi, Yaser Mohammed. "Access to the Medical Devices in Developing Countries." *Handbook of Medical and Health Sciences in Developing Countries: Education, Practice, and Research*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023. 1-31.