

# Evaluating the Effectiveness of a Multidisciplinary Team Training Program on Enhancing Communication, Collaboration, and Patient Safety in Healthcare Settings of Hafr Al-Batin

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## ABSTRACT

Effective communication and collaboration among multidisciplinary healthcare teams are essential for ensuring patient safety and optimal care delivery. However, challenges in teamwork and communication persist in healthcare settings, contributing to adverse events and suboptimal outcomes. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary team training program on enhancing communication, collaboration, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. A qualitative approach was employed, using focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with 30 healthcare professionals who participated in the team training program. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes related to the impact of the training program on teamwork, communication, and patient safety. The findings revealed that participants perceived improvements in their teamwork and communication skills, as well as increased awareness of patient safety practices following the training program. The study highlights the potential of multidisciplinary team training programs in enhancing teamwork, communication, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin.

**KEYWORDS:** healthcare, patient safety, team training.

## 1. Introduction

Multidisciplinary teamwork and effective communication are crucial for delivering safe and high-quality patient care in healthcare settings (Rosen et al., 2018). However, breakdowns in communication and collaboration among healthcare professionals are common, leading to adverse events, errors, and suboptimal patient outcomes (Källberg et al., 2017). In Saudi Arabia, studies have reported challenges in teamwork and communication within healthcare teams, highlighting the need for interventions to improve these aspects of care delivery (Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Almasabi

& Thomas, 2017).

Team training programs have emerged as a promising approach to enhance teamwork, communication, and patient safety in healthcare settings (Hughes et al., 2016). These programs typically involve structured learning activities and simulations that focus on developing teamwork skills, communication techniques, and shared mental models among multidisciplinary team members (Weaver et al., 2014). Evidence suggests that team training programs can lead to improvements in team performance, communication, and patient safety outcomes (Buljac-Samardzic et al., 2020).

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary team training program on enhancing communication, collaboration, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. The findings of this study can inform the development and implementation of team training interventions in healthcare organizations to improve teamwork and patient safety.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Multidisciplinary Teamwork and Communication in Healthcare**

Multidisciplinary teamwork involves the collaboration and coordination of healthcare professionals from different disciplines to provide comprehensive patient care (Epstein, 2014). Effective teamwork is characterized by shared goals, clear roles and responsibilities, mutual trust, and open communication (Salas et al., 2015). In healthcare settings, multidisciplinary teamwork has been associated with improved patient outcomes, reduced errors, and increased job satisfaction among healthcare professionals (Rosen et al., 2018).

Communication is a critical component of multidisciplinary teamwork in healthcare (Leonard et al., 2014). Effective communication involves the clear and timely exchange of information among team members, active listening, and the use of structured communication techniques such as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) (Foronda et al., 2016). Poor communication has been identified as a major contributing factor to adverse events and errors in healthcare settings (The Joint Commission, 2016).

### **2.2 Challenges in Teamwork and Communication in Healthcare Settings**

Despite the recognized importance of teamwork and communication in healthcare, challenges persist in these areas. Studies have identified various barriers to effective teamwork and communication, including hierarchical structures, professional silos, lack of training, and inadequate organizational support (Weller et al., 2014; Welp & Manser, 2016).

In Saudi Arabia, studies have reported challenges in teamwork and communication within healthcare teams. Al-Ahmadi (2009) found that nurses in Saudi hospitals reported low levels of teamwork and communication with physicians. Almasabi and Thomas (2017) identified barriers to effective teamwork in Saudi healthcare organizations, including lack of leadership support, poor communication skills, and

limited opportunities for team training.

### 2.3 Team Training Programs in Healthcare

Team training programs have been developed to address the challenges in teamwork and communication in healthcare settings. These programs aim to improve team performance and patient safety by providing structured learning activities and simulations that focus on developing teamwork skills, communication techniques, and shared mental models among multidisciplinary team members (Weaver et al., 2014).

Team training programs have been implemented in various healthcare settings, including operating rooms, emergency departments, and intensive care units (Hughes et al., 2016). These programs typically involve a combination of didactic instruction, simulation-based training, and debriefing sessions (Buljac-Samadzic et al., 2020). Team training programs have been found to improve teamwork behaviors, communication skills, and patient safety outcomes (Weaver et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2016).

## 3. Methods

### 3.1 Study Design

A qualitative approach was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary team training program on enhancing communication, collaboration, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were conducted with healthcare professionals who participated in the team training program.

### 3.2 Participants

Thirty healthcare professionals from various disciplines, including nursing technicians, nurse assistants, health assistants, and nurses, participated in the study. Participants were recruited from different healthcare settings in Hafr Al-Batin, including the Ministry of Health Branch, Births and Children's Hospital, and Alrabwa Health Center. Purposive sampling was used to ensure representation from different disciplines and healthcare settings.

### 3.3 Multidisciplinary Team Training Program

The multidisciplinary team training program was designed to enhance teamwork, communication, and patient safety among healthcare professionals. The program consisted of four modules delivered over two days, covering topics such as effective communication techniques, teamwork strategies, situational awareness, and patient safety principles. The training sessions included didactic presentations, group discussions, and simulation-based exercises.

### 3.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews with participants. Three focus group discussions, each consisting of 6-8 participants,

were conducted to explore participants' experiences and perceptions of the team training program's impact on their teamwork, communication, and patient safety practices. Additionally, 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with individual participants to gain deeper insights into their experiences and perspectives.

The focus group discussions and interviews were conducted by trained facilitators and were audio-recorded with participants' consent. The discussions and interviews were guided by a semi-structured protocol that included open-ended questions related to participants' experiences with the team training program, its impact on their teamwork and communication skills, and their perceptions of patient safety practices.

### 3.5 Data Analysis

The audio recordings of the focus group discussions and interviews were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-phase approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Two researchers independently coded the transcripts, identifying initial codes and themes. The researchers then met to compare and discuss their findings, refining the themes through consensus. The final themes were reviewed and validated by a third researcher to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

## 4. Results

The thematic analysis of the focus group discussions and interviews revealed three main themes related to the impact of the multidisciplinary team training program on enhancing communication, collaboration, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin.

### 4.1 Enhanced Teamwork and Communication Skills

Participants reported that the team training program had a positive impact on their teamwork and communication skills. They described improved collaboration and coordination among team members from different disciplines, as well as increased confidence in their ability to communicate effectively with colleagues. Participants highlighted the value of the communication techniques and strategies learned during the training program, such as active listening and structured communication tools like SBAR.

"The training program helped me to understand the importance of effective communication in teamwork. I learned how to use SBAR to communicate patient information clearly and concisely with my colleagues." (Nurse Technician)

"After the training, I noticed that our team became more cohesive and collaborative. We started to communicate more openly and respectfully with each other, which improved our overall teamwork." (Health Assistant)

### 4.2 Increased Awareness of Patient Safety Practices

Participants reported that the team training program increased their awareness and

understanding of patient safety practices. They described gaining new knowledge and skills related to identifying and preventing potential safety risks, as well as recognizing the importance of speaking up and reporting safety concerns.

"The training program opened my eyes to the various patient safety issues that can occur in healthcare settings. I learned how to identify potential risks and take proactive measures to prevent harm to patients." (Nurse Assistant)

"I now feel more comfortable speaking up and reporting safety concerns to my supervisors and colleagues. The training program emphasized the importance of a blame-free culture and encouraged us to work together to improve patient safety." (Nursing Technician)

#### 4.3 Perceived Improvements in Patient Care and Outcomes

Participants perceived that the enhanced teamwork, communication, and patient safety practices resulting from the team training program had a positive impact on patient care and outcomes. They described improvements in the quality and efficiency of care delivery, as well as increased patient satisfaction.

"Since the training program, I have noticed that our team is more efficient and coordinated in providing patient care. We are able to communicate important information quickly and accurately, which has reduced delays and errors." (Nurse)

"I believe that the improved teamwork and communication among our staff have led to better patient outcomes. We are more attentive to patients' needs and concerns, and we work together to provide high-quality care." (Health Assistant)

### 5. Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that the multidisciplinary team training program was effective in enhancing communication, collaboration, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin. Participants reported improvements in their teamwork and communication skills, increased awareness of patient safety practices, and perceived positive impacts on patient care and outcomes.

These findings are consistent with previous research that has demonstrated the effectiveness of team training programs in improving teamwork, communication, and patient safety in healthcare settings (Weaver et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2016). The use of a qualitative approach in this study allowed for a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives, providing valuable insights into the mechanisms through which team training programs can enhance these important aspects of healthcare delivery.

The study highlights the potential of multidisciplinary team training programs as a strategy for addressing the challenges in teamwork and communication identified in healthcare settings of Saudi Arabia (Al-Ahmadi, 2009; Almasabi & Thomas, 2017). The findings suggest that investing in team training programs can lead to improvements in the quality and safety of patient care, as well as increased job satisfaction and collaboration among healthcare professionals.

However, this study has some limitations. The small sample size and the use of a single healthcare organization limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study relies on participants' self-reported experiences and perceptions, which may be subject to bias. Future research should include larger and more diverse samples, as well as objective measures of teamwork, communication, and patient safety outcomes.

## 6. Conclusion

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a multidisciplinary team training program on enhancing communication, collaboration, and patient safety in healthcare settings of Hafr Al-Batin, Saudi Arabia. The findings suggest that the team training program had a positive impact on participants' teamwork and communication skills, awareness of patient safety practices, and perceived improvements in patient care and outcomes.

The study highlights the potential of team training programs as a strategy for improving the quality and safety of healthcare delivery in Saudi Arabia. Healthcare organizations should consider implementing multidisciplinary team training programs as part of their efforts to enhance teamwork, communication, and patient safety.

Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of team training programs and to identify the most effective strategies for implementing and sustaining these programs in different healthcare settings. Additionally, future studies should investigate the impact of team training programs on objective measures of patient safety and healthcare quality.

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