

Abstract

The aim of the study was to explore the psychiatric nurses' perception of how they may influence compliance to treatment in patients with schizophrenia.

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A qualitative descriptive research design was used. Ten qualified psychiatric nurses with at least six months experience working in a psychiatric setting participated in a semi-structured interview. The research tool was designed specifically for this study following an in-depth literature review on the subject. A phenomenological approach was used to analyze the transcribed interviews and identify emergent themes and sub-themes.

All the nurses involved agreed that the psychiatric nurse has a very important role in treatment compliance for patients with schizophrenia. Most of them felt that they were in the best position to improve treatment compliance. They identified their knowledge base and the strong therapeutic relationship they form with the client as contributing to increase compliance in patients. Conversely, they felt that lack of human resources and time constraints hindered their ability to improve patient compliance. While all the participants had a good idea of what was required to foster patient compliance in patients with schizophrenia, virtually all of them failed to mention specific interventions such as psychoeducation and compliance therapy.

The study helped identify what helps and hinders psychiatric nurses in their effort to improve patient compliance. It also revealed the need to further train them in specific intervention which were shown by literature to improve compliance. Recommendations to this effect were made at the end of the study.