ABSTRACT

Health Communication is the crucial link that keeps the health care system running and delivering effective service. Doctor-patient communication is one form of health communication which has a direct impact on treatment and prognosis, particularly in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) like Hypertension, Diabetes, Arthritis, etc. The present study investigates into the impact of Quality of Communication between doctors and patients diagnosed with primary hypertension on their adherence to treatment and prognosis of the disease. The objective is to determine if doctor-patient communication has an effect on the treatment adherence and prognosis of the patients with primary hypertension and the impact of adherence on prognosis. For this a mixed approach of correlational design, between-subjects and Simple Mixed factorial design was adopted. A sample of 30 doctors and 300 hypertensive patients forming 30 nests, each with one doctor and 10 patients was studied. Quality of communication was measured with a unique method using similarity index that took into account the transaction between the doctor and the patient as a whole. Adherence was measured through self report while prognosis was measured by pre and post Blood Pressure readings as well as doctors’ ratings. Results revealed that quality of communication plays a significant role in adherence to treatment and prognosis. Results also revealed that adherence plays an important role in deciding the prognosis. Further, the impact of quality of communication on prognosis suggested a definite pathway through adherence. The implications discussed included the need for scientific approach to study the quality of doctor-patient communication, and the analysis of cost-effectiveness of training the doctors in effective communication to address the disease burden of Hypertension.