

# Interprofessional Communication in Radiology Departments: Bridging Gaps Between Radiologists, Nurses, and Patient Advocates

Mohammed Abdullah AlHammad<sup>1</sup>, Afnan Abdulmajeed Al Jaber<sup>2</sup>,  
Thamer Juwayid Ayed AlKuwaykibi<sup>3</sup>, Farhan Muhareb alanzi<sup>4</sup>,  
Mohammed Sayyar Al Anazi<sup>5</sup>, Mohammed Abdulaziz AlSultan<sup>6</sup>

Date of publishing: 15<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020

## Abstract:

Effective interprofessional communication is crucial for delivering high-quality, patient-centered care in radiology departments. This research paper explores the communication dynamics between radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates, identifying gaps and proposing strategies to enhance collaboration. Through a comprehensive literature review and qualitative analysis, we examine the impact of communication breakdowns on patient outcomes, staff satisfaction, and overall department efficiency. The findings highlight the need for structured communication protocols, shared decision-making, and regular interprofessional training to foster a culture of open dialogue and mutual respect. By implementing these recommendations, radiology departments can bridge communication gaps, improve patient care, and create a more cohesive and efficient healthcare environment.

**Keywords:** interprofessional communication, radiology, radiologists, nurses, patient advocates, collaboration, patient-centered care.

## Introduction

Radiology departments are critical hubs within healthcare systems, providing diagnostic imaging services and guiding treatment decisions. Effective communication among the diverse professionals in these departments is essential for delivering high-quality, coordinated patient care [1]. Radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates each bring unique expertise and perspectives, but communication gaps can hinder their ability to collaborate effectively [2]. This research paper aims to explore the interprofessional communication dynamics in radiology departments, identify existing gaps, and propose strategies to bridge these gaps and enhance patient care.

## Literature Review

Numerous studies have investigated the importance of interprofessional communication in healthcare settings. Ellingson [3] highlighted the need for collaboration between radiologists and technologists to ensure accurate imaging interpretation and patient safety. McMahon et al. [4] found that ineffective communication between radiologists and referring physicians can lead to delays in diagnosis and treatment physicians should also communicate immediately if the patient needs to go under the radiology to make sure that there was no delay in diagnosing or providing the service for the patients. Longo [5] emphasized the role of nurses in facilitating communication between patients and radiologists, advocating for patient needs and preferences. However, research on communication between radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates in radiology departments is limited. Khokhar et al. [6] identified communication barriers between radiologists and nurses, including differences in communication styles and lack of face-to-face interaction. Steinke et al. [7] explored the potential benefits of involving patient advocates in radiology decision-making but noted the challenges of integrating their perspectives into established workflows.

## Methodology

### 3.1. Study Design

This study employed a descriptive methodology to explore interprofessional communication dynamics in radiology departments. A comprehensive literature review identified existing research on communication between radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates. Qualitative data was collected through semi-structured interviews with professionals from each group to gain insights into their experiences and perspectives on communication gaps and potential solutions.

### 3.2. Participants

Ten radiologists, ten radiology nurses, and five patient advocates were recruited from three radiology departments in large urban hospitals using a purposive sampling method. The participants were selected based on their experience working in radiology departments and their willingness to share their perspectives on interprofessional communication.

### 3.3. Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant, lasting approximately 45-60 minutes. The interviews explored participants' experiences with interprofessional communication in radiology departments, perceived communication gaps, and suggestions for improvement. The Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Codes were assigned to text segments, and themes were identified by comparing the coded data iteratively. The themes were then organized into categories of communication gaps and potential solutions.

## Results

### 4.1. Communication Gaps

The analysis revealed several communication gaps between radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates in radiology departments:

**a. Role ambiguity:**

Participants reported a need for clarity regarding the roles and responsibilities of each professional group, leading to misunderstandings and duplication of efforts.

**b. Hierarchical barriers:**

Nurses and patient advocates often felt that radiologists, perceived as the ultimate decision-makers, did not value their input.

**c. Language and jargon:**

Radiologists' use of technical language and medical jargon has created barriers to effective communication with nurses and patient advocates.

**d. Time constraints:**

**e. High workloads and time pressures**

limit face-to-face interaction and collaborative decision-making opportunities.

### 4.2. Strategies for Improvement Participants

suggested several strategies to bridge communication gaps and enhance interprofessional collaboration:

**a. Structured communication protocols:**

Implementing standardized communication tools and protocols, such as SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation), can help ensure clear and concise information exchange.

**b. Interprofessional training:**

Regular interprofessional education and training sessions can help build relationships, foster mutual understanding, and improve communication skills.

**c. Shared decision-making:**

Involving nurses and patient advocates in decision-making can help ensure patient preferences and needs are considered and promote a more collaborative approach to care.

**d. Designated communication channels:**

Establishing dedicated communication channels, such as regular team meetings or electronic messaging systems, can facilitate timely and effective information sharing.

### Discussion

This study's findings highlight the complex communication dynamics in radiology departments and the need for targeted interventions to bridge interprofessional gaps. The identified communication barriers, such as role ambiguity, hierarchical structures, and language differences, are consistent with previous research in other healthcare settings [8][9]. However, the specific challenges radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates face in radiology departments require tailored solutions.

The proposed strategies, including structured communication protocols, interprofessional training, shared decision-making, and designated communication channels, can potentially improve collaboration and patient care. These strategies align with recommendations from professional organizations, such as the American College of Radiology and the Society of Radiologists in Ultrasound, which emphasize the importance of teamwork and effective communication in radiology practice [10].

### Conclusion

Interprofessional communication gaps in radiology departments can significantly impact patient care, staff satisfaction, and overall department efficiency. This research paper has explored the communication dynamics between radiologists, nurses, and patient advocates, identifying specific barriers and proposing strategies for improvement. By implementing structured communication protocols, investing in interprofessional training, promoting shared decision-making, and establishing dedicated communication channels, radiology departments can bridge these gaps and create a more collaborative, patient-centered care environment. Further research is needed to evaluate these strategies' effectiveness in practice and explore additional interventions to enhance interprofessional communication in radiology settings.

### REFERENCES:

- [1] B. F. Branstetter, "Basics of Imaging Informatics: Part 2," *Radiology*, vol. 244, no. 1, pp. 78-84, 2007.
- [2] C. M. Kuzminski and K. M. Dolan, "Overcoming Communication Barriers in Radiology," *Journal of the American College of Radiology*, vol. 12, no. 12, pp. 1285-1286, 2015.
- [3] L. L. Ellingson, "Communication, Collaboration, and Teamwork among Health Care Professionals," *Communication Research Trends*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 1-21, 2002.
- [4] M. T. McMahon, J. E. Novak, and J. S. Ross, "Improving Communication Between Radiologists and Referring Physicians," *Academic Radiology*, vol. 24, no. 11, pp. 1327-1328, 2017.
- [5] L. Longo, "Radiological Errors: The Need for a Change in Communication," *Journal of Medical Imaging and Radiation Sciences*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 225-230, 2018.
- [6] A. Khokhar, S. Moran, and E. Bentley, "Communicating Across Disciplines: Challenges in Radiology-Nursing Collaboration," *Radiologic Technology*, vol. 89, no. 3, pp. 266-272, 2018.
- [7] G. W. Steinke, J. A. Tate, and P. R. Gill, "The Role of Patient Advocates in Radiology Decision-Making: A Qualitative Study," *Patient Education and Counseling*, vol. 101, no. 7, pp. 1255-1260, 2018.
- [8] L. A. Sheer and R. C. Bark, "Interdisciplinary Communication in the Hospital Setting," *Journal of Healthcare Management*, vol. 60, no. 1, pp. 15-27, 2015.
- [9] K. Körner and H. J. Wirtz, "Interprofessional Teamwork in Medical Rehabilitation: A Comparison of Multidisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Team Approach," *Clinical Rehabilitation*, vol. 27, no. 8, pp. 745-755, 2013.
- [10] American College of Radiology, "ACR Practice Parameter for Communication of Diagnostic Imaging Findings," 2014. [Online]. Available: <https://www.acr.org/-/media/ACR/Files/Practice-Parameters/communicationdiag.pdf>. [Accessed: 18-Nov-2018].