



Level of Midwives Participation in Breaking Bad News

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The communication skills of health personnel are one of the factors that determine the acceptance of treatment, the level of satisfaction, and the participation of clients. Poor communication, especially when medical personnel are required to break bad news (BBN) about an acute or chronic illness, can negatively affect outcomes and patient satisfaction. Due to the variety of duties of midwives in society, midwives can be placed in different situations as responsible for BBN, such as a mother's death, an infant's death, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, fetal abnormality, cancers, etc. It seems that because there is not enough information about the participation of midwives in BBN in Iran, formal training in BBN for midwives is not included in in-service and academic training programs. Therefore, this study aimed to determine midwives' participation level in BBN.

Methods and Materials: This descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted on 116 midwives working in Isfahan City in 2023. Using the easy access sampling method, the samples were selected from working midwives who met the entry criteria, including employment in midwifery posts and informed consent to enter the study. Information was collected using a two-part questionnaire: personal characteristics (age, marital status, graduation time, length of employment, and similar experience in midwifery or her close person) and a questionnaire on the level of participation of midwives in breaking bad news. SPSS version 21 software was used for data analysis. Quantitative variables were reported as mean (Standard Deviation) and qualitative variables as number (%). The normality of data distribution was evaluated with the Kolmogorov test, skewness index, and q-q-plot diagram. A significant level of 5% was considered.

Results: The study's participants ($n = 155$) had a mean age of 39.31 ± 8.20 . Most participants were married; the mean (SD) of marriage years was 10.75 ± 10.10 . Approximately half of them had a minimum of one child. Most had a bachelor's degree (74.2%)—their average working experience was 12.57 years. The mean score of midwives' participation in the BBN process was 26.79 ± 7.33 . The GLM model results indicated that among the demographic variables, working at a health center ($\beta^* = -2.39$, 95% CI: -4.66, -0.12), compared to a hospital, was associated with a higher score in the contribution to BBN.

Conclusion and Discussion: The results of this study showed that the participation rate of midwives in BBN in gynecology and obstetrics departments in health centers and hospitals is high. The most participation of midwives in BBN was related to midwives working in comprehensive health centers. Therefore, midwives are among the most important members of the treatment team, and they can play a fundamental role in the process of BBN. Therefore, it is necessary to provide specific training courses and acquire.

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