



# GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS: A PANACEA FOR IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THOSE WHO MANAGE HEALTH INFORMATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF PORT HARCOURT TEACHING HOSPITAL, RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

The study looked at effective communication as a magic bullet for practitioners of health information management in UPTH, Rivers State, Nigeria. A multistage sampling technique was adopted, along with a descriptive study design. There were 225 participants, and a sample size of 140 was chosen. The tools utilized were checklists and questionnaires. Results indicated that most people agreed that there was no reasonable relationship between patients and providers in all sections of UPTH, according to 40 (66.7%) of the respondents who responded that health information management practitioners frequently used verbal communication skills to interact with patients, and 15 (25%) of the respondents who responded that they did not. Additionally, 340 (84%) YES responses and 65 (16%) NO responses indicate a lack of motivation and management support., lack of educational advancement as a barrier to HIMP has excellent communication skills. The management of UPTH, the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Health, Healthcare Partner Agencies, Health Records Officers Registration Board of Nigeria should collaborate and ensure the implementation of policies regarding adequate motivation, institutional support, availability of prerequisite infrastructure, and frequent training and retraining of health information management practitioners on communication skills improvement as well as on the use of technological tools/aids in performing their healthcare and related health services to ensure timely, accurate, effective, efficient, quality patient care services, and informed decision-making in the UPTH, and other Nigerian healthcare facilities.

**KEY WORDS:** Communication Skills, Effectiveness, Health Information Management Practitioners, Panacea, and Performance

## I. INTRODUCTION

Every step of the process for delivering healthcare services requires communication. Health professionals must have adequate practical communication skills in order to accurately share patient information with another facility, a group of health information management practitioners, doctors, nurses, specialists, and other staff in a specific hospital with regard to how to manage chronic and endemic cases, treat acute/severe cases and incoming patients, handle epidemic and pandemic cases. Accordingly, [1] argued that effective communication skills facilitate the development of respectful and productive relationships with patients, their families, caregivers, and other stakeholders. They also make it easier to exercise personal leadership, improve conflict-resolution techniques, and inspire others.

Effective communication includes teamwork and collaboration, intercultural communication, critical thinking, and using a variety of communication techniques and media for expressing one's ideas and for understanding others [2]. It is not just about being eloquent, although that is undoubtedly a significant advantage. More importantly, in order to carry out job effectively, one must connect with others, address issues, seek knowledge, and have strong interpersonal skills. One must also be adaptable to positive



change when it is required. When a health facility's information management department receives a patient's or client's first visit or phone call, it is essential that the department be staffed with professionals who are well-versed in communication techniques to ensure the delivery of high-quality healthcare services at all times. However, the health information management department at most hospitals has been characterized by a lack of qualified staff, a poor patient-provider interaction, and incorrect health records management techniques, all of which frequently result in the delivery of subpar healthcare services [3].

It is impossible to overstate the importance of effective communication skills for health information management practitioners. This is due to the fact that when health information management practitioners are poor and inefficient in their communication skills, there will be a drop in the delivery of high-quality healthcare in the hospitals and throughout the nation. It is crucial to remember that developing effective communication skills aids a healthcare professional in getting beyond obstacles that can stymie information sharing and decision-making. [4] characterized communication as the process of passing along ideas, attitudes, emotions, or behaviors from one person to another in order to address issues facing humanity and unite people for a shared goal. [4] also argued that health information management professionals (health practitioners) should take some required training courses to gain the necessary communication skills to be effective in their work at all times and ensure better health service delivery. Because of this, [5] asserted that healthcare practitioners' communication skills have been deteriorating over time, despite significant emphasis being paid to the development of these skills in order to improve the quality of healthcare services delivered. On a similar vein, [6] noted that despite communication being a crucial component of the process of providing healthcare services (nursing), healthcare professionals (nurses) have little to no formal training in how to interact effectively with patients and their families. Therefore, [7] recommends that healthcare professionals continue to strengthen their communication skills in order to support the implementation of patient safety and the provision of high-quality healthcare services.

The professional needs effective communication skills to deal with different individuals and their diverse ways of life, cultures, and perspectives on a constant basis. Communication skills are essential for better service delivery, whether a manager is training staff, exchanging information with doctors, or working with the financial department. Additionally, among all life skills, excellent communication is likely the most crucial. One can share information with others through communication and understand what is being spoken to them. The act of communicating involves moving information from one location to another. It can be done verbally (using the voice), graphically (using logos, maps, charts, or graphs), non-verbally (using body language, gestures, and tone and pitch of voice), or in writing. Undoubtedly another essential skill set is written communication (using printed or digital media like books, periodicals, websites, or emails). Whether contacting vendors about program changes or sending communications to various administrative offices, the ability to communicate effectively and clearly is a requirement for health administrators and managers [9].

According to [4], in order to deliver effective and efficient health services in healthcare facilities, it is always important to combine many of these communication formats (verbal, written, visual, and non-vocal). It might frequently take a lifetime for someone to master the specifics of the full communication process because the world and events change so swiftly. Therefore, one must employ every technique at their disposal to ensure that they master every key communication skill that will elevate and distinguish them in the work of consistently delivering outstanding healthcare services devoid of bias. Health organizations with good communication policies typically increase their patients' capacity to satisfy their needs, whereas those without effective and efficient communication protocols invariably have a negative influence on patients' well-being. Communication skills among healthcare workers have been noted to need improvement [10]. Few recipients of health services are aware of the importance of good communication in healthcare settings for their well-being and the closing of gaps brought about by poor communication skills in the delivery of health services by healthcare professionals and health institutions. This study, which examined good communication as a panacea for practitioners of health information management at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria, was built on these observations.

## **1.1 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM**

Every healthcare facility that has access to qualified personnel with strong communication skills frequently improves the healthcare demands that are met for its patients, fostering patient loyalty and retention. Effective connections with patients, their families, caregivers, and other stakeholders can be cultivated with the aid of good communication skills. Communication skills of healthcare professionals have been seen to be a major cause of poor patient-provider relationships and inconsistent health service delivery in many parts of the world. Numerous policies and strategies may have been implemented by health organizations to ensure the continuous development of healthcare practitioners' communication skills [1].

Although some researchers have conducted a limited number of studies on the communication skills of healthcare professionals and the provision of healthcare services, none have specifically addressed the issue of effective communication as a cure-all for the abilities of practitioners of health information management, with a focus on UPTH, Rivers State, Nigeria. As a result, the researchers made the decision to investigate the effectiveness of health information management practitioners' performances at the



University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria, in order to advance knowledge and offer remedies for the problems facing humanity.

**I.II Aim and objectives of the Study:** The purpose of this study is to ascertain the impact of effective communication abilities on practitioners' performances at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria. While the study's goals also comprise: 1. To identify the various communication techniques employed often by health information management professionals at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria. 2. To identify obstacles to practitioners' effective communication skills in their work at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria. 3. To find approaches to enhance information management professionals' performance in communication at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria.

**I.III. Research Questions:** To direct this investigation, three research questions were developed.

i. What kinds of communication techniques do professionals in health information management utilize at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria? ii. What are the challenges to health information management practitioners' effective communication in their work at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria? iii. How can health information management practitioners at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria, improve their effective communication skills?

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In order to ensure and accommodate medical, legal, and ethical norms, health information management practitioners (HIMP) manage and build health information programs. The upkeep, gathering, and analysis of data that is received by physicians, nurses, and other healthcare providers, including for-profit and nonprofit health partner organizations, is also fundamentally influenced by these HIMPs. Therefore, in order to provide high-quality healthcare services, these contributors to the healthcare data rely on the correct and reliable data managed by health information management professionals [11]. In another breakthrough, [12] established that the measurement of the impact of health care services on the population is frequently hampered by weak, uncoordinated, and a lack of trustworthy data and health records management procedures, which also has a negative influence on the general public's health.

Planning information systems, creating health policy, and determining present and future information demands are among the duties of practitioners in health information management [13 & 14]. Additionally, they claimed that HIMP frequently uses informatics to produce, gather, document, use, preserve, retain, and dispose of information in order to satisfy the administrative, professional, ethical, and legal requirements of health care records management. Health information management professionals oversee and build health information programs to make sure they adhere to ethical, legal, and medical requirements. In order to provide the general public with high-quality healthcare services, they are also essential to the upkeep, collecting, and analysis of data that is received by physicians, nurses, other healthcare professionals, and health partner organizations.

The correct collection, management, and use of information within healthcare systems enhances the determination of the system's effectiveness in detecting health problems, defining priorities, identifying creative solutions, and allocating resources to improve health outcomes in a timely manner [15]. Practitioners of HIM always work with clinical, epidemiological, demographic, financial, reference, and coded healthcare data. To facilitate the collection of consistent, comparable clinical information required for tasks like outcomes research, continuous quality improvement, and epidemiology, health information management practitioners must understand the language of health and how to communicate it with other stakeholders. They also need to understand the relationships between clinical terms used to describe special medical concepts and the more aggregated form of data collected with standardized classifications [16]. This indicates that those who work in health information management should develop effective communication skills in order to provide high-quality patient care.

In order to accomplish a specific objective, communication is sometimes viewed as a two-way process of exchanging or sharing ideas, thoughts, and information. According to Kuma's 2000 theory, communication is a process required to facilitate the intended change in human behavior and informed individual and community engagement to accomplish set goals. In recent years, communication has evolved into an interdisciplinary science that draws heavily from social science, where the human brain has significantly expanded for better clarity of thought and social inter-sectoral coordination. Providing individuals with information is communication's main purpose. It is the duty of the government, the media, and health information management professionals to enlighten the public with accurate and fair information, spark their curiosity, and empower them to make wise decisions.

The majority of people put a lot of consideration into key life decisions, sometimes over time and after multiple educational encounters. The cultural value, belief, and norm of the population affect their acceptance of knowledge. A fundamental component of human existence and mutual collaboration in fostering harmony, resolving crises, and improving economic growth



as well as life expectancy quality is the availability of accurate, trustworthy, and timely information. One uses communication skills when offering and receiving various types of information. Examples include sharing fresh perspectives, emotions, or even project updates. Speaking, listening, watching, and empathizing with what has been heard are further communication skills. A new form of communication called a computer-based communication system has also greatly expanded the potential for knowledge and skill transfer. Additionally, it has made it possible to have direct, immediate conversation with anyone, wherever in the world, using email and any online chat. In a nutshell, [17] proposed that the computer-based communication system has developed into a rapidly-growing communication medium with enormous potential and has significantly impacted education in India due to the high rate of usage that is rising every day.

Interpersonal skills are those people employ when engaging in face-to-face conversation with one or more other people. This is especially true today, when healthcare delivery is becoming more complex and diverse. Listening is another component of interpersonal communication abilities. It is important to keep in mind that communication is always a two-way street and that receiving information requires active listening. People listen to the one speaking for a better comprehension during the communication process for around 45% of the time before acting on what they heard. Additionally, interpersonal communication abilities are crucial in a variety of situations and settings, including health systems and other places where people may come into contact with and engage with others. People with strong interpersonal communication abilities can collaborate more successfully and find lasting solutions to problems within and between teams or groups in both official and informal settings.

### **II.I Types of Communication Skills used by Health Information Management Practitioners**

In order to effectively offer healthcare to beneficiaries and interact with other hospital stakeholders, health information management practitioners must possess strong communication skills. When patients or clients visit a hospital or require medical attention, they must regularly communicate with one another about new policies, procedures, and the status of activities as well as with patients and clients. According to [17], many educational institutions are implementing training programs in the areas of educating prospective employees how to communicate by first outlining the many forms of communication skills and their significance in human coexistence and in the provision of health services. Health care professionals can learn a variety of abilities in the many communication processes, such as written and oral communication, formal and informal communication, sign and symbol communication, and computer-assisted communication.

Even in a variety of situations, communication abilities go much beyond basic verbal and nonverbal communication. These communication skills encompass interpersonal, writing, and presentation abilities. Presentation techniques are not often used by a lot of healthcare professionals. According to the literature, good presentation abilities involve more than merely talking your way through a slide show while standing in front of a screen. It also includes the capacity to effectively communicate a certain point of view in small-group or large-group meetings, conferences, and seminars. As a result, practitioners of health information management must develop a number of basic abilities, such as the ability to consistently deliver information to patients, coworkers, and a group of people in a formal or casual context. More so, developing writing abilities is essential for all communication processes, including spoken language and face-to-face interactions (limited to the oral-aural type of communication). Another essential component of communication skills that a healthcare professional should possess is the capacity for clear and effective writing. Poorly written patient information frequently resulted in subpar treatment, a high number of needless deaths, a string of patient/caregiver legal claims, and inefficient use of the medical system's resources. The abilities one possesses and employs to maintain a healthy body and mind are referred to as personal skills. In conclusion, poor writing can frustrate the reader and possibly harm the reputation of the author and the organization.

### **II-I Barriers to acquiring good communication skills by health information management practitioners**

The [18] assert that it is normal for patients to worry about their health and wellbeing. But according to a poll conducted in 2016, just 38% of adult in-patients with anxieties or fears could unquestionably locate someone in the hospital with whom to discuss their problems. There are several obstacles to effective communication, some of which are Time restraints, inadequate infrastructure, environmental problems including noise and privacy, pain and exhaustion, a lack of enabling policy and procedure, a lack of motivation and support, an inability to adapt to organizational policy changes, an absence of enabling policy and procedure; Use of vocabulary, values and beliefs, information overload, embarrassment and anxiety and Low levels of job satisfaction, indifference in one's career, or both.

### **II.II EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

With a population of 70 and a simple random sample size of 60 health information management officers from two hospitals, [19] conducted a descriptive survey study on the evaluation of health information management practice among health records professionals in Osun State, Nigeria. Findings demonstrated that the non-computerization of health information in hospitals was caused by ineffective and inaccurate operational services brought on by a lack of technical knowledge and ICT capabilities. The findings demonstrated that the lack of professionally educated health information officers in the hospital, insufficient provision of



working instruments, and missing and misfiled patient health records were all contributing factors to the poor work flow. The study concluded that the management of the hospitals should take immediate action to address the aforementioned deficiencies by hiring trained and certified health information officers and providing ICT facilities to allow for quick access to and sharing of patient health information among the hospital's medical staff.

The School of Health Technology in Minna, Niger State, Nigeria, employed a systematic review design study to examine the importance of health information management and the functions of health information management professionals in healthcare delivery systems. The results showed that because of the prevalence of onerous paper-based and fragmented health data management systems, especially in developing countries, health records have not yet been properly evolved into a process in healthcare delivery systems. The findings demonstrated that health information management specialists despise clinical coding procedures. The findings also showed that even while some of the practitioners work in environments where health information systems are used, they do not fully comprehend their own obligations to medical confidentiality. The results also demonstrated that health information management professionals have a skills gap in information technology that is incompatible with their responsibilities in health information systems. The study came to the conclusion that although paper-based records have many drawbacks, including the need for large storage spaces and challenges retrieving records, and computerized systems have been advocated, the paper-based system is legally more acceptable as documentary evidence because it is more difficult to tamper with the records without being noticed.

[21] conducted a study on ways to help doctors communicate more effectively. The findings demonstrated that healing a patient required a holistic strategy that takes into account factors beyond only treating an illness. The findings also showed that in order to provide patients with high-quality medical care, a doctor must possess a number of other abilities in addition to technical knowledge. The results demonstrated that a doctor's effective communication abilities increase patient compliance and general satisfaction. Findings showed that some fundamental characteristics of effective communication, such as attentive listening, empathy, and paying attention to both verbal and nonverbal aspects of communication, are commonly overlooked. Further research revealed the significance of having accurate knowledge on the nature, progression, and prognosis of the disease. The study found that formal training for doctors to improve their communication skills is essential and has been shown to enhance overall results; as a result, it recommended including formal training in communication skills in the medical curriculum and providing training for practicing doctors in the form of CMEs and CPEs.

More specifically, [22] looked at the literature on effective communication in nursing practice. The value of successful communication can be easily neglected because research shows that it is virtually always an automatic, unintentional action for the majority of people. The findings indicated that as communication is an essential component of nursing and a means through which nurses relate to patients, having some practical communication skills will improve the standard of healthcare services. The findings demonstrated that good communication has a direct impact on the wellbeing and satisfaction of patients. Results also showed that the traits of healthcare professionals and patients are the main causes of communication obstacles. The study came to the conclusion that using practical communication skills in healthcare settings improves not only patients but also healthcare providers in terms of their health and job satisfaction. The study suggested that more training be established to teach nurses how to employ effective communication in a professional setting, as well as knowledge of their own characteristics and techniques for understanding patients' signs and features.

In a similar vein, [23] investigated interactions between healthcare practitioners and patients with low socioeconomic status, applying the COM-B model to identify variables that influence healthcare providers' communicative behavior. According to the findings, 703 studies were gathered using a systematic review, and secondary data were examined using an inductive and deductive content analysis. The results showed that the COM-B model was used by classifying the secondary data and the systematic review results into the model's constituent parts. Studies have shown that those with lower socioeconomic position tend to have worse health than those with higher socioeconomic status. According to the findings, one possible explanation for the disparity in health is that healthcare providers communicate differently depending on their socioeconomic class. The findings also indicated that healthcare professionals frequently communicate in a biomedical manner with patients who have low socioeconomic level, indicating that these patients are not happy with the way healthcare professionals communicate with them. The results also demonstrated that there are significant differences between the characteristics that underlie effective communication between healthcare professionals and patients with low socioeconomic status and those factors documented in the literature about doctor-patient communication among other groups. Further research indicated that it is recommended that healthcare personnel use a patient-centered communication style in order to help people of low socioeconomic class communicate more effectively. The study concluded that further research is needed to understand the best ways for healthcare professionals to interact with patients from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. [24] examined healthcare communication: a narrative assessment of the literature and helpful suggestions. Findings showed that efficient and effective communication is essential in the healthcare industry and that written communication between specialized and primary care continues to be the most common mode of



communication. The review included 69 articles in total, and the findings revealed that poor communication can have a variety of detrimental effects, including the interruption of care, compromises to patient safety, patient dissatisfaction, and the inefficient use of precious resources, including unnecessary investigations, physician work time, and financial repercussions. The study found that there is room for improvement in both the content and timeliness of written communication. It was suggested that graduate and postgraduate training should place more emphasis on communication between caregivers so that it becomes ingrained as a crucial skill and quality characteristic of each caregiver.

### III. MATERIAL & METHODOLOGY

**Area of Study:** The University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital (UPTH), Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, served as the study's subject. The UPTH is located in Choba, an area of Rivers State, Nigeria's Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The capital of Rivers State is Port Harcourt, which is recognized for the catchphrase "treasure base of the nation." One of the six states in Nigeria's South-South Geopolitical Zone is the state in question. There are 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State, which was founded in 1967. The Atlantic Ocean borders Rivers State in the south, Bayelsa and Delta State in the west, Akwa Ibom State and the Imo River in the east, and Abia, Imo, and Anambra State in the north, respectively [25].

**Research Design:** The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design approach for this study. **Population:** One hundred (100) outpatients and one hundred and twenty-five (125) members of the health information management staff from the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria, made up the study's population. **Sampling Method:** The sample size of 96 health information management professionals and 81 outpatients with a 95% confidence level was chosen for this study. The method of sampling that was used was a multi-stage method. This set of employees was chosen because they may be held accountable for any errors in their practices and even face penalty. **The instrument for Data Collection:** The researchers employed a patient checklist as the second respondent and a self-made questionnaire for practitioners of health information management as the first respondent. **Data Collection Method:** The researchers conducted checklist interviews with patients while also personally distributing the research instrument to health information management professionals after receiving approval from the study institution administration and participants' consent to participate in the study. The acquired data were investigated using descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency and percentage tables. **Consider ethical issues:** This paper underwent a Turn-it-in plagiarism check to ensure that all facts and ideas were properly documented and referenced. Respondents were told that their responses would only be used for academic purposes, and the authority of UPTH and the administration were approached for consent and authorization to conduct the study. There were no competing interests in the inquiry, as well.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 96 questionnaires were given out to the health information management practitioners; 86 of those were recovered, and 80 of them had been correctly completed, yielding a return rate of 83.3%; meanwhile, of the 81 questionnaires given to patients, 60 had been correctly completed and had been duly recovered, yielding a return rate of 74.1%. The analysis of the study was based on Figures 80 and 60 (140), which are shown in the tables below.

#### Section B: Research Questions

##### Research Question 1

What kinds of communication techniques do professionals in health information management utilize when they present at UPTH?

##### PART I for Patients

**Table 2: Health information management professionals' comments on the many kinds of communication strategies they employed in their UPTH performances**

S/N	Variables	Yes (%)	No (%)
1	In this institution, health information management professionals frequently interact with patients verbally.	45(75%)	15(25%)
2	Health information management professionals in this hospital always communicate with patients and providers in writing.	33(55%)	27(45%)
3	Every aspect of the health information management processes in this hospital always has a positive patient-provider interaction..	20(33.3%)	40(66.7%)
4	In this institution, health information management professionals are skilled at leveraging technology to facilitate communication with patients.	25(41.7%)	35(58.3%)
5	Health information management professionals frequently utilize symbols to explain facts to patients in this institution.	10(16.7%)	50(83.3%)
6	Practitioners of health information management always respond to patient complaints through formal communication processes.	45(75%)	15(25%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>178(49.4%)</b>	<b>182(50.6%)</b>

Source: Researcher's field survey, 2022



Table 2. showed that health information management practitioners frequently used verbal communication abilities, as shown by yes responses of 45 (75%) and 35 (55%) for written patient-provider communication; 45 (75%) Yes responses indicated that HIMPs frequently used formal procedures in carrying out their performances, while 40 (66.7%) No responses indicated that there was no good patient-provider relationship in any section of the health information management practice; 35 (58.3%) No responses indicated that HIMPs are not good at using technology to aid communication in attending to the patient; 50 (83.3%) No responses demonstrated that symbols are not frequently used to demonstrate facts to patients; and 45 (75%) No responses demonstrated that HIMPs are not good

## PART II: for Health Information Management Practitioner

**Research Question 2:** What obstacles prevent health information management professionals from performing effectively at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria?

**Table 3: Obstacles to good communication skills of health information practitioners**

S/N	Variables	Yes (%)	No (%)
6.	In this hospital, health information management practitioners' effective communication abilities are frequently hampered by a lack of enthusiasm.	80 (100%)	0(0%)
7.	Are Health Information Management Practitioners' effective communication skills hindered in their performances in UPTH by a lack of management support?	70 (87.5%)	10 (15.5%)
8.	Does a Health Information Management Practitioner's success in UPTH suffer from their incapacity to adapt to organizational policy changes?	60 (75%)	20 (25%)
9.	Do Health Information Management Practitioners' effective communication skills frequently inhibit them from performing well in UPTH due to a lack of educational advancement?	50 (62.5%)	30 (37.5%)
10.	Is the absence of the necessary infrastructure a hindrance to the performance of Health Information Management Practitioners in UPTH?	80 (100%)	0(0%)
11.	Health information management practitioners' effective communication skills are hampered by a lack of staff retraining in keeping with the current worldwide trend in their work at UPTH.	75(93.75%)	5(6.25%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>340 (84%)</b>	<b>65(16%)</b>

**Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2022**

Table 3. demonstrated that replies from 80 (100%) Yes responders indicated a lack of motivation, and 70 (87.5%) Yes, 60 (75%), indicated a lack of management support. Yes, 50 (62.5%) respondents indicated that HIMP was unable to adapt to organizational policy change. Yes said that HIMPs' lack of educational development and 80 (100%) Yes noted that a lack of suitable infrastructure were obstacles to their ability to communicate effectively in their roles at UPTH, Rivers State, Nigeria.

**Research Question 3:** What can be done to help health information management professionals at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital in Rivers State, Nigeria, communicate more effectively?

**Table 4: Ways to improve good communication skills of health information Practitioners**

S/N	Variables	Yes (%)	No (%)
12.	Can continuing education aid health information management professionals' performances in UPTH by enhancing their effective communication skills?	70 (87.5%)	10 (12.5%)
13.	Can the supply of proper infrastructure always result in the development of practitioners' effective communication abilities in their performances at UPTH?	60(75%)	20(25%)
14.	Do health information management practitioners' communication abilities improve as a result of staff motivation?	80 (100%)	0(0%)
15.	Can the personal growth of a health information management practitioner's communication abilities improve their job effectiveness in UPTH?	60(75%)	20(25%)
<b>Total</b>		<b>270 (84.4%)</b>	<b>50 (15.6%)</b>

Source: Researchers Field Survey, 2022



Table 4. indicated that respondents' responses of 70 (87.5%) agreed on continuing education, 60 (75%) agreed that adequate infrastructure should be provided, 80 (100%) agreed that motivation is important, and 60 (75%) agreed that personal development is one of the many ways to enhance the communication skills of health information management practitioners in their roles at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Rivers State, Nigeria.

### **Research Question 1: What kinds of communication techniques do practitioners of health information management utilize in their UPTH performances?**

Inferred from Table 2's YES responses of 45 (75%), 33 (55%), and 45 (75%), HIMPs frequently employ verbal communication skills, patient-provider communication is always conducted in writing, and formal communication processes are used in their job performances. However, NO responses of 40 (66.7%), 35 (58.3%), and 50 (83.3%) respectively show that HIMP good patient-provider relationships are not seen in all practice areas, that technology is rarely used to aid communication, and that symbols were not frequently used to convey information to patients in the hospital. According to the total Yes 178 (49.4%) and No 182 (50.6%) responses, HIMPs do not possess strong communication skills that would improve their ability to conduct their jobs. These results concur with those of [21 & 6] who emphasized the importance of communication skills in the process of providing healthcare services (nursing), and they also showed that healthcare professionals (nurses) receive little to no formal training in effective patient and family communication. [4] claimed that in reality, effective and efficient health service delivery in medical facilities always combines verbal, written, visual, and nonverbal communication skills.

### **Research Question 2: What are the barriers to Good Communication Skills of Health Information Management Practitioners in their Performances at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Rivers State, Nigeria?**

As barriers to HIMPs' performances in UPTH, Table 3 indicated that YES, 80(100%) lack of motivation, 70(87.5%) lack of management support, 60(75%) inability to adjust to organizational change of policy, 50(62.5%) lack of educational advancement for HIMPs, 80(100%) lack of appropriate infrastructure, and 75(93.75%) lack of staff retraining in line with global trend. Overall, there were 65 (16%) NO responses and 340 (84%) YES responses. These imply a lack of management support, a failure to adapt to organizational policy changes, a failure to grow educationally, and a failure to have the necessary infrastructure. This study concurs with [22 & 18]'s assertions. According to a study, the characteristics of healthcare workers and patients, a lack of motivation, and an inadequate infrastructure are the main obstacles to effective communication.

### **Research Question 3: What are the methods for enhancing the performance of health information management practitioners at the teaching hospital of the University of Port Harcourt in Rivers State?**

As different ways to enhance the effective communication skills of health information management practitioners in their performances at the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Rivers State, Nigeria, Table 4 showed that 70(87.5%) YES responses were given to continuing education, 60(75%) YES responses were given to the provision of appropriate infrastructure, 80(100%) YES responses were given to motivation, and 60(75%) YES responses were given to individual personal development. The study of [22, 7 & 21] included formal training in communication skills, personal development of healthcare practitioners' communication skills, and provision of adequate infrastructure to support the implementation of patient safety and delivery of high-quality healthcare services. These results are consistent with some of the findings and recommendations in that study.

## **V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The provision of such services is made possible by staff members' effective communication skills, which they have learned and put to use in both normal and emergency/exigency instances. This is necessary for every organization to be competitive and to produce excellent output. Only when health information management professionals and other members of the medical and allied health disciplines function with proficiency and effective communication skills will patients and other stakeholders feel satisfied and be able to work as a cohesive team. Following are the recommendations made by the researchers in light of the main findings of this study.

1. The management of UPTH and the Heads of Departments and Unit heads/supervisors should exert all of their effort to ensure proper good provider-patient relationships for the delivery of high-quality healthcare services by engaging all stakeholders in discussion and teamwork when making decisions about healthcare delivery and any emergencies that may likely arise.
2. To address shortcomings caused by inadequate health information management owing to manual techniques, the management of UPTH and its supporting organs, including health partners, should always assure the provision and effective continuous use of technology aids in communication.
3. The management and staff of UPTH should exert more effort to improve verbal communication processes between healthcare providers and patients as well as among themselves, as the majority of patients lack adequate knowledge of how to use technological communication devices, and even poor network and epileptically power supply can make it impracticable to use such devices in communication while always keeping Nigerian in mind.





4. The management of UPTH, the Federal Government through the Federal Ministry of Health, Healthcare Partner Agencies, and the Nigerian Health Records Officers Registration Board should work together and ensure the implementation of policies regarding sufficient motivation, institutional support, the availability of prerequisite infrastructure, and regular training and retraining of health information management practitioners on communication skills improvement as well as on the use of health information management software.

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