

Health literacy competences to improve respectful and compassionate care in Tanzania (HEALCARE)

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Background

People accessing health care services expect to be treated with respect and compassion. This is explicitly recognised by the United Republic of Tanzania's National Guidelines on Respectful and Compassionate Nursing and Midwifery Care. The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC), identifies as a strategic outcome for nursing and midwifery services '*a nursing and midwifery cadre that is able to provide quality and compassionate patient centred care*' (MoHCDGEC, 2021, p46). This also is a key element in delivering a quality healthcare service (2017), contributing to which is an aim of the HEALCARE project. The MoHCDGEC (2017) define compassionate care as referring to '*the care given through relationships based on empathy, respect, kindness and dignity accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate sufferings*' (p12). Sinclair et al. (2017) describe compassion as a relational care construct and identify communication as a core skill of compassion competence. Developing health literacy focused communication competences is a key driver in improving compassionate and respectful care. The current Tanzanian national bachelor of nursing and midwifery curriculum has the potential to be strengthened with the incorporation of health literacy communication competences as a means to improve respectful and compassionate care in nursing practice in the Tanzanian health service.

Objectives

The main objectives of the HealCare project are to:

1. Develop an educational intervention for BScN students in Tanzania that will improve their Health Literacy and Respectful and Compassionate Care competences.
2. Implement effective educational intervention for BScN students in Tanzania that will improve their professional conduct using Health Literacy and Respectful and Compassionate Care competences in this study.

Methods and Design

This project brings together a partnership of Tanzanian universities with healthcare providers and European universities working collaboratively, through a participatory approach in the spirit of equality and respect for different educational strategies, cultural beliefs, languages, social norms and expectations. Continuous exchange has been found in research to produce culturally and logistically appropriate outcomes (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003). Working in this way, the projects' activities are directed at improving the quality of healthcare provision in The United Republic of Tanzania through curriculum development, capacity building in nurse education and pilot programme implementation to refine teaching materials.

Public Patient Involvement

Patient participation is planned in the development of the educational programme.

Results

An outline curriculum has been developed comprising three modules: Health Literacy, Customer Care in Healthcare and, Respectful and Compassionate Care aligned with the Tanzanian undergraduate nursing curricular structures. A facilitator guide and student manual have been developed with a training the trainers manual. Training the trainers activities have been undertaken.

Knowledge Translation

Curriculum developments to include health literacy for respectful and compassionate care are integrated into the project process with the active involvement of three Tanzanian universities and three associated health facilities with The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children.

Dissemination

Healcare website can be found at: <https://bit.ly/3tDoRh2>

Short video about the project: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3et02p3zLHE>