

Communication in Healthcare

Based on **AETCOM** As per the latest CBME Guidelines
Attitude, Ethics and Communication

is a primary textbook for all medical students and a comprehensive guide tailored for healthcare professionals aiming to improve their communication skills with patients and families. It offers practical advice for effective communication in various healthcare settings and covers essential topics such as active listening and nonverbal cues.

Whether you are an experienced professional or new to the field, notably, the book aligns with the **AETCOM** (Attitude, Ethics, and Communication) syllabus, emphasizing the importance of communication in the healthcare. It will enhance the expertise of a professional in healthcare-related communication and build stronger doctor—patient relationships with this invaluable resource.

Salient features:

- Builds strong and effective relationships with patients.
- Practical advice for effective communication in various healthcare settings (emergency department, ICU, outpatient department, inpatient department, clinics).
- Learn about active listening and nonverbal cues.
- Equips you with a range of communication techniques for providing the best possible care.
- Suitable for both seasoned professionals and students | fresh entrants in the healthcare industry.
- Prepared according to the requirements of Competency-Based Undergraduate Curriculum of the National Medical Commission.

Abhijit Sinha Roy MBBS, DCH (Institute of Child Health)

is a distinguished clinician with over four decades of experience, specializing in neonatology. Throughout his illustrious career, he has held key leadership positions in various healthcare settings, including large central government PSU, corporate hospitals, and as the CEO of a telemedicine organisation. Additionally, he served as the medical advisor to a not-for-profit hospital chain focusing on middle-income groups.

Currently, Dr Sinha Roy is an independent advisor on healthcare administration, providing valuable insights and expertise to the healthcare industry. He has also been invited as a guest faculty in several universities, including Symbiosis. He has written two popular books of the Belles-lettres genre: *Truth Salad* and *Truth Salad on the Wheels*.



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Medical Students, Clinicians and
Healthcare Practitioners



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to

*those healthcare professionals
whose wrong way of communication,
inflated ego, and attitude led to a
mismatched relationships with patients and
their relatives.*

Blurb

Effective communication plays a vital role in the realm of healthcare, enabling understanding and support between doctors, patients, and healthcare professionals. Over the past decades, healthcare has undergone remarkable transformations due to technological advancements and shifting mindsets. In this changing landscape, the perception of healthcare professionals has evolved, and trust between doctors and patients has diminished. Recognizing the significance of communication, the National Medical Commission of India now emphasizes its importance for medical students under AETCOM (Attitude, Ethics and Communication) competencies. *Communication in Healthcare* explores scenarios of communication asynchronously and offers proactive solutions to rebuild trust and enhance communication among healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, patient care services, and medical-technical personnel. It aims to guide professionals in this overlooked but crucial field and contribute to the restoration of trust in healthcare.

Abhijit Sinha Roy

Foreword

I have been privileged to be a clinician for over four decades, serving as Professor and Head in the department of gastroenterology, as well as dean of research at the prestigious All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi. During this time, I have witnessed unprecedented progress in medical knowledge, clinical interventions, preventive medicine, and diagnostics, leading to better outcomes for patients worldwide.

However, as medical science continues to evolve and progress, the resulting complexities have also grown exponentially. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to ensure that doctors and medical practitioners maintain effective communication with their patients.

As a result of my long experience in clinical medicine, I have come to realize that three key aspects of the interaction between a doctor and his patient are critical to success. These are the trust that the patient has in the doctor, the doctor's success as a sound and caring clinician, and the responsibility that the doctor has for the life of his patient.

An ideal scenario involves patients and their doctors enjoying a positive interaction with one another, and to achieve this goal, it is essential that the interaction between patients, their family members and their treating doctors is handled with care and respect. This interaction is perhaps the most crucial variable in ensuring that patients receive the best possible care.

In the present book, the author, Dr Abhijit Sinha Roy, has brilliantly articulated the ways in which doctors and patients can foster effective communication in different clinical and medicolegal situations. Dr Sinha Roy is an outstanding pediatrician, administrator, and healthcare organizer who has worked in numerous tertiary care hospitals in India.

I firmly believe that trust is a critical factor in achieving positive clinical outcomes, and that the trust that patients

have in their doctors and the hospitals in which they are treated is essential to the success of any healthcare delivery. Furthermore, the interaction between doctors and patients should include communication about the complexity of their illness, the possible natural course of their condition, the type of intervention, and the probability of a successful outcome. Without such communication, the probability of obtaining the necessary consent and cooperation from the patients and their family members will be suboptimal.

In recognition of the importance of effective communication, the National Medical Commission has included communication skills in the curriculum for MBBS training (AETCOM module). Dr Sinha Roy's book, which examines communication in clinical and medicolegal situations, is timely and appropriate.

The book provides a structured and in-depth analysis of communication in various clinical scenarios, including outpatients, inpatients, ICUs, HDUs, and medicolegal aspects. It emphasizes the importance of effective communication and the role that it plays in achieving positive clinical outcomes. This book is a valuable resource for doctors in the early stages of their training, and it will undoubtedly contribute to making them more caring and empathetic clinicians.

Having had the privilege of reading this book, I can attest to the author's mastery of the subject. The book is a must-read for doctors worldwide who seek to provide the best possible care for their patients, particularly those dealing with pain and suffering. I am confident that this book will be an invaluable resource for clinicians everywhere, helping to improve the quality of care and the overall patient experience.

Subrat Kumar Acharya

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Preface

Welcome to the world of *Communication in Healthcare*, an invaluable textbook designed to enhance your understanding and application of effective communication within the healthcare domain. As you embark on your journey in the field of healthcare, it is crucial to recognize the vital role that communication plays in patient care and professional relationships.

Throughout my academic and professional experience, I have witnessed the transformative power of effective communication firsthand. This textbook is a culmination of my expertise, research, and insights garnered from years of dedicated study and practical application in the healthcare industry.

In the ever-evolving landscape of healthcare, effective communication skills have become more critical than ever. Technological advancements, societal shifts, and changing expectations have reshaped the dynamics between healthcare professionals and patients. Today's healthcare professionals must navigate a complex web of diverse patient backgrounds, cultural nuances, and varied communication preferences. Mastering the art of communication is no longer a luxury but an essential skill for success in this demanding field.

This textbook serves as a comprehensive guide, offering an in-depth exploration of the multifaceted aspects of communication in healthcare. We delve into the intricacies of patient interactions, interdisciplinary collaborations, ethical considerations, and the impact of technology on healthcare communication. By studying and implementing the principles and strategies outlined in this book, you will develop a solid foundation in effective communication that will serve you throughout your academic journey and future professional endeavors.

Drawing upon the collective wisdom of renowned scholars, healthcare practitioners, and educators, this textbook provides a wealth of theoretical frameworks, evidence-based practices, and practical examples. It offers a holistic approach, acknowledging the importance of effective communication not only between doctors and patients but also among healthcare professionals across various disciplines. Nurses, physiotherapists, patient care services, and medical technical personnel, among others, will find valuable insights and guidance within these pages.

As you immerse yourself in the chapters that follow, I encourage you to actively engage with the material, reflect upon your own experiences, and consider the real-world implications of effective communication in healthcare. May this textbook empower you to embrace the challenges and complexities of communication, while instilling in you a profound sense of responsibility to serve your patients and colleagues with integrity, empathy, and compassion.

Together, let us embark on this educational journey, equipping ourselves with the tools and knowledge to transform healthcare communication for the betterment of patients and society as a whole.

Abhijit Sinha Roy

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to all the good communicators from whom I have learned how to communicate properly.

I am grateful to all the bad communicators from whom I have learned how one should not communicate.

I extend my thanks to my family members and all well-wishers who have encouraged me to write this book.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the several colleagues and friends who have shared their expertise and wisdom, in enriching this textbook. Their invaluable insights and scholarly contributions have made this comprehensive resource possible.

I would like to extend a special thanks to Prof Subrat Kumar Acharya, an internationally renowned gastroenterologist. Prof Acharya generously provided the foreword for this book, lending his expertise and endorsing the importance of effective communication in healthcare. I am deeply grateful for his support and willingness to contribute to this project.

Thanks to CBS Publishers and Distributors for publishing this book. They recognized the utmost importance of communication in healthcare in the health industry and came forward to publish this book on this subject. Dr Ashu Singh, Editor—Content and Development (Life Science) of CBS, has guided me throughout all phases of giving proper shape to the book.

Thanks to Shri CD Mukherji for guiding me about the publication of this book.

Finally, thanks to all the readers; I will be immensely satisfied if the book is of any help to them.

Abhijit Sinha Roy

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The Vanishing Art of Medical Treatment

The practice of medicine in its broadest sense includes the whole relationship of the physician with his patient. It is an art, based to an increasing extent, on the medical sciences, but comprising much that remains outside the realm of any science. The art of medicine and the science of medicine is not antagonistic but supplementary to each other. There is no more contradiction between the science of medicine and the art of medicine than between the science of aeronautics and the art of flying.

The treatment of the disease may be entirely impersonal; the care of a patient must be completely personal.

What is spoken of as a “Clinical Picture” is not just a photograph of a man sick in bed. It is an impressionistic painting of the patient surrounded by his home, his work, his relations, his friends, his joys, sorrows, hopes, and fears.

— By Francis Peabody in his article ‘The Care of the Patient’ published in the *Journal of American Medical Association* on 19th March 1927 Vol 88 number 12.

Prologue

For effective patient care, doctors should be intimately involved with the patient and with those directly involved with patient care. The doctor should be aware of the patient's triggers of happiness, sorrow, and all such details. Only then, he can treat the patient properly.

Similarly, the patient and his relatives should have complete faith in the healthcare professional. For the sole purpose of his early recovery, it would be beneficial for the patient to keep faith in the modality of treatment as advised by the doctors and not suspect that he has any money-making motives behind his advice.

Although the patient suffers from ill health, the relationship between healthcare professional (HCP) and the patient and his relatives/friends should be healthy and balanced.

The most important factor for a good relationship between healthcare professionals and patients is good communication. As the saying goes 'Common sense is not so common', effective communication skill (which is expected from one and all) is the most uncommon factor in today's world.

In this book, all the HCPs are mentioned as doctors for ease of narration. As far as this book is concerned, in all scenarios mentioned, except for certificates to be signed by qualified doctors, situations in which the narration itself makes it obvious that doctor means the qualified medical doctor and structured meeting scheduled between medical doctor and patient, doctors mean HCP. Also, for ease of narration, a single gender is mentioned. There is no gender bias towards males, females, and others. These two liberties are taken just for ease of narration and in no way intended to bring down any profession or gender.

All professions where the service provider and the customer have direct interaction like hospitality, travel, and customer

care services of various organizations may find several suggestions given in this book helpful.

I strongly hope that my experience with various communication techniques, which are narrated in this book, will benefit the readers.