3.1: Introduction

Nurses are critical in the delivery of essential health services and are core in strengthening the health system [1, 2]. They bring people-centred care closer to the communities where they are needed most, thereby helping improve health outcomes and the overall cost-effectiveness of services [3]. Nurses usually act as first responders to complex humanitarian crises and disasters; protectors and advocates for the community and communicators and co-ordinators within teams. Communication skills for nurses are essential but may be difficult to master. Communication is the exchange of information between people by sending and receiving it through speaking, writing or by using any other medium. Clear communication means that information is conveyed effectively between people. To be a successful nurse, excellent communication skills are required [4]. Nurses speak to people of varying educational, cultural and social backgrounds and must do so in an effective, caring and professional manner, especially when communicating with patients and their families [5]. The quality of communication in interactions between nurses and patients has a major influence on patient outcomes. This influence can play a very important role in areas such as patient health, education and adherence [6]. Good communication plays an important role in the organization’s effective functioning [7, 8, 9]. A nurse must therefore, continuously try to improve his/her communication skills as poor communication can be dangerous and lead to confusion.