



Review article

Transferring patient information using the SBAR communication tool for interpretation

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Abstract

Goal: Secondary analysis of resources related to the transmission of information during the patient transfer using the SBAR communication tool.

Methods: The search was carried out using the scientific databases CINAHL, MEDLINE, PubMed, EBSCO Discovery Service, Google Scholar, Science Direct and ProQuest between September 2022 and February 2023. We found 1,262 scientific articles. After evaluating the relevance of the publications, we used 17 expert publications in English.

Results: We can conclude that the SBAR standardised form is an effective tool for the transfer of information when translating a patient. Patient safety and quality of care are increased provided that health professionals are adequately trained. Communication regarding the transfer of information in healthcare facilities is poor and the quality of the information transmitted requires further research and a focus on specific clinical disciplines and positions in healthcare.

Conclusion: The available research shows it is impossible to generalise the use of the SBAR communication transfer tool to all clinical workplaces. An unequivocal agreement was not found, but accepting the SBAR tool is evident from the research results.

Keywords: Effective communication; Information transfer; Patient translation; Safe care; SBAR

Introduction

This review article analyses health professionals' use of the SBAR communication tool. Effective communication is essential to ensure safe patient care.

In 2007, the Joint Commission International (JCI) and the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed implementing a standardised approach to handover communication using the SBAR (Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation) technique.

The situation, background, assessment, and recommendation domains increase the quality of the transferred information, and this standardised tool is widely used. The situation involves unambiguous identification of the patient and the referring health professional. The background analyses everything that preceded the patient's condition, and the problem is assessed. A recommended approach specifies the solution/elimination of the problem. The care can continue using clear, concise, and accurate patient information transfer by translating it.

High-quality information transfer is essential for safe healthcare and is used in many clinical situations. Poor com-

munication during handovers can lead to unnecessary intervention delays.

According to the Act on the Protection of Public Health, a healthcare worker has the right to obtain information about whether a patient is an infectious disease carrier, as well as other facts related to the patient's health (Těšínová et al., 2019).

A healthcare worker's duties include providing information about health status, mandatory confidentiality, and the obligation to properly maintain medical documentation (Těšínová et al., 2019).

Medical documentation is an essential tool for all medical workers. It is a primary source of information about a patient and evidence of the legality of the professional procedure (Těšínová et al., 2019).

When transferring a patient, the original healthcare provider must transfer the necessary information about the health status to the newly selected provider to ensure the continuity of other health services. The original healthcare provider provides a copy of the original medical documentation, or the patient/newly chosen health service provider requests it. The original always remains with the health service provider (Těšínová et al., 2019). Poor or no communication in an or-

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ganisation is usually a precursor for problems (Tomandl et al., 2020).

Communication is useless or even harmful if the target does not understand or grasp the essence of the message. An important factor in communication is comprehensibility (Tomandl et al., 2020).

The goal of every healthcare provider is to ensure a uniform way of sharing information about a patient's health. The patient, doctor, and nursing staff must be informed. The ideal tool is the standardised technique (Pokorná et al., 2019).

Miscommunication between healthcare providers is one factor that contributes to error rates. Effective communication requires an engaged receiver and sender (Galatzan and Carrington, 2018). The study results indicate that problems during information transfer are usually reported as adverse events (Brabcová et al., 2015).

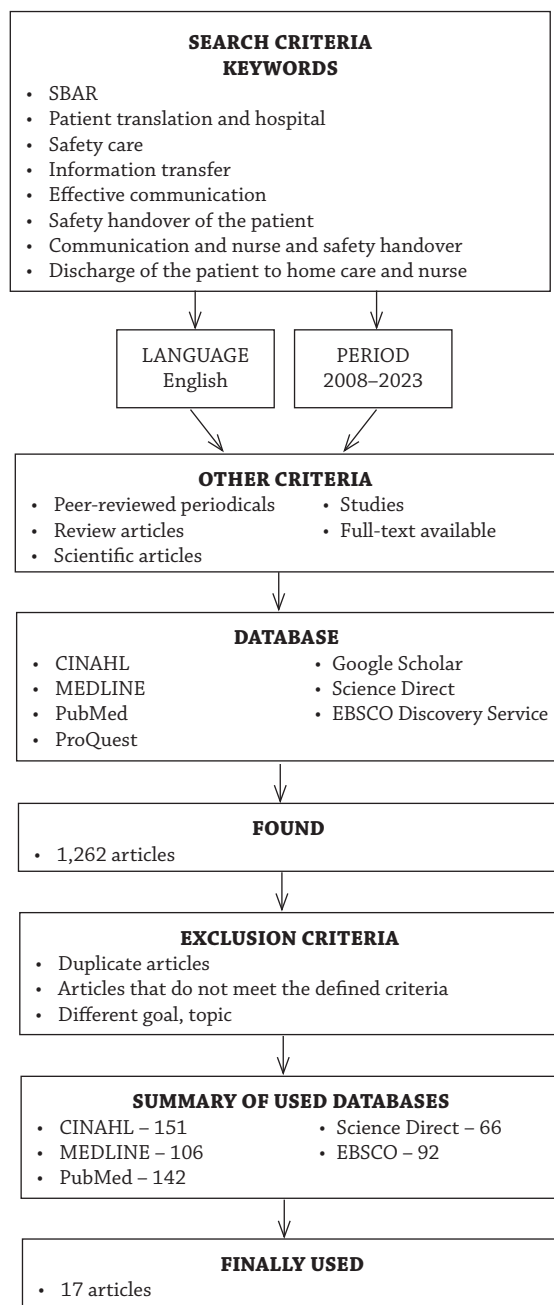


Diagram 1. Source research

Materials and methods

We used resources from CINAHL, MEDLINE, PubMed, EBSCO Discovery Service, Google Scholar, Science Direct, and ProQuest. The predefined search keywords and phrases were SBAR, safe care, patient translation, information transfer, effective communication. The search for professional publications in English was carried out between September 2022 and February 2023.

Diagram 1 shows a search overview and the process leading to the final number of usable sources. Table 1 shows the scientific articles found, including the stated research objective, outcome, and type.

Results and discussion

After a thorough analysis of the issue, we can conclude that the field of information transfer using the SBAR communication tool is unevenly studied. Research carried out abroad in various medical fields and health professions states it is impossible to clearly identify agreement during information transfer in a specific nursing field.

The study of Ruhomaula et al. (2019) aims to assess awareness and understanding of SBAR based on the conducted audit. Structured interviews helped nurses to understand barriers to SBAR use, after which they had simulation training. Improving the quality of the transmitted information requires managers' active intervention and support by providing training and using tools to raise awareness of the standardised SBAR tool. The authors reported that 54.4% of respondents showed improvement by using SBAR after training. 100% of the interviewees understood better and had basic information about SBAR.

In their systematic study, Müller et al. (2018) aimed to improve communication in the team during patient transfer. Patient safety has a fundamental influence on the improvement of the quality of provided care, and an adverse event may occur because of poor patient transfer. Poor communication is the cause of 60% of adverse events and is very common in the patient transfer process. Conclusions show that there is a lack of quality studies defining this issue from the point of view of patient safety, and there is only moderate evidence of an improvement in patient safety after the introduction of SBAR, especially during telephone communication.

Edwards and Woodard (2008) concluded that, in a relatively short time after implementing a standardised tool in health-care practice, the quality of information transfer increased with the SBAR form, and nurses succeeded in the complex implementation process.

A study by Dewi et al. (2019) included eleven nurses and aimed to study their perception of SBAR as a tool for information transfer. They confirmed differences in perceiving optimal socialisation and motivation. They recommended necessary management control and motivation when transmitting information through the SBAR system.

The process of evidence-based medicine and the introduction of SBAR into practice has been discussed by Beckett and Kipnis (2009). They described patient safety, better teamwork, and increased satisfaction of nurses and doctors due to the introduction of SBAR into practice. They suggested systemic networking of SBAR communication education and curricula but emphasised the difficulty of implementing change in established patterns in communication processes. The evidence shows that when the tool is used in isolation, the consistency

Table 1. Scientific articles, the established research objective, result, and type

Author's name, year, country	Article title	Aim	Methodology	Results
Edwards and Woodard (2008) USA	SBAR for maternal transports: going the extra mile	Extend the success of SBAR use in translating mothers	Systematic review	Success in implementation in nurses – SBAR as a compliant standardized tool
Beckett and Kipnis (2009) USA	Collaborative communication: integrating SBAR to improve quality/patient safety outcomes	Evaluate the effectiveness of the SBAR collaborative intervention for best practice	Quantitative research questionnaire Qualitative observation interviews	Evidence has been translated into practice
Flink et al. (2012) Sweden	The key actor: a qualitative study of patient participation in the handover process in Europe	Explore perspectives from patients when transferring patients between providers	Qualitative secondary analysis interviews with patients in five European countries	Patient participation is related to the health care system, the activities of health, and the ability of patients to participate
Merten et al. (2017) Netherlands	Safe handover	Identify research studies. Provide practical guidance	Review study	Tools and handover structures (such as SBAR) improve the quality of handover
Müller et al. (2018) Germany	Impact of the communication and patient hand-off tool SBAR on patient safety	Improve team communication during patient handover	Systematic study – 8 studies with design	Moderate evidence for improve, patient safety following SBAR implementation, in particular, in telephone communication. Lack of quality studies
Shahid and Sumesh (2018) Canada	Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation Communication Tool for Hand-off in Health Care – A narrative review	To find out the quality of the information transmitted during patient handover	Review study	Narrative review has highlighted the challenges of communication among health care providers
Dewi et al. (2019) Indonesia	Study Phenomenology Pelaksanaan Handover Dengan Komunikasi SBAR	Explore nurses' perceptions of using SBAR – in the transfer of communication	Qualitative research with a phenomenological approach	Differences in perception – optimal socialization and motivation, necessary control in SBAR transmission
Raeisi et al. (2019) Iran	A systematic review on the structured handover interventions between nurses in improving patient safety outcomes	Identify handover challenges related to security and quality of health services	Systematic review	Communication is a major challenge in the handover process
Ruhomaulu et al. (2019) UK	Improving the quality of handover: implementing SBAR	Describing the effect of interventions. Assessing SBAR awareness	Structured interviews	Full information, 54.4% improvement in use, awareness, effectiveness of handover with SBAR requires a simulated, controlled environment
Simamora and Fathi (2019) Indie	The influence of training handover based SBAR communication for improving patients safety	Determine the impact of training on the implementation of the handover of nursing care by the SBAR system	Quasi-experimental method	There is an impact of training on nursing documentation and a difference in nurses' commitment to implementing the nursing handover
McGrath et al. (2020) USA	Increasing patient safety in hemodialysis units by improving handoff communication	Improve the quality of care provided, Increase patient safety – prevent, errors in communication	Qualitative and quantitative research	Support tools for SBAR implementation, after training
Supriadi et al. (2020) Indonesia	The association between SBAR communication methods and patient safety culture application in A. W. Sjahranie Hospital Samarinda	Investigate the relationship between SBAR communication methods and the application culture of safety	Analytical study and cross-sectional design	Recommendations for the hospital in applying SBAR communication methods
Yuliyanti et al. (2020) Indonesia	Increasing job satisfaction of nurses through SBAR communication in in handover of nursing tasks	To determine the impact of SBAR implementation on nurse satisfaction	Difference test for the experimental group	The SBAR method has an impact on nurse satisfaction

Table 1. (continued)

Author's name, year, country	Article title	Aim	Methodology	Results
Alruwaily (2021) UK	The effectiveness of the situation background assessment and recommendations (SBAR) framework in improving patient safety outcomes in the nursing context	Explore the impact of the SBAR communication and transfer tool in the area of patient safety	Structured review of 12 studies	SBAR can be used to improve patient safety in a variety of healthcare contexts and in patients of different age groups
Pena et al. (2021) Portugal	Using the SBAR in care transitions: A technique for effective communication	Report back with the implementation of the SBAR tool	Log analysis	The tool has standardized activities in the process, contributing to improved interdisciplinary care
Rehm et al. (2021) Germany	Evaluation of a paper-based checklist versus an electronic handover tool based on the situation background assessment recommendation (SBAR) concept in patients after surgery for congenital heart disease	Evaluate paper and electronic forms of communication SBAR tool	A randomized observational study, comparison of handover protocols	Recommendations for more flexible development of control mechanisms
Mulfiyanti and Satriana (2022) Indonesia	The correlation between the use of the SBAR effective communication method and handover implementation of nurses on patient safety	Explore the impact of SBAR	Systematic review	The SBAR approach can reduce the number of errors in communication between health professionals – and increase patient safety

of the communication message is increased, and the SBAR tool brings a significant change in communication.

McGrath et al. (2020) aimed to increase the quality of care and patient safety by preventing errors in communication. As a result, they recommended SBAR implementation support tools and education, leading to decreased error rates.

Simamora and Fathi (2019) investigated the impact of training on information transfer in nursing practice using the SBAR system. Based on a quasi-experimental method, nurses promote standard communication when transferring important information to reduce room for errors. One route to standardisation is leveraging SBAR communication effectiveness. The study shows the use of educational programmes in transferring information, keeping nursing documentation and the need of training programmes to set up effective communication among nurses. The result of this study correlates with the conclusions of Ruhomaula et al. (2019).

A review study by Merten et al. (2017) mentions studies that deal with this issue and provides practical guidance. Study conclusions analyses show increased transmitted information quality using the standardised SBAR tool when the entire nursing team and the patient are involved in the transmission process.

Flink et al. (2012) conducted a qualitative secondary analysis in five European countries. They aimed to explore patients' perspectives on information transfer between healthcare providers. Patients prefer a process where accountability is unambiguous. Healthcare organisations need an understandable and well-thought-out system of responsibility for information and patient transfer, considering the patient's individual needs and health condition. It is essential that the patient and healthcare professionals are involved.

A systematic review by Raeisi et al. (2019) identified transfer challenges related to ensuring the quality of healthcare delivery. Their results show that communication is a challenge in the transfer process. The results of the selected articles indicated various challenges, such as communication, lack of coordination, failure to use a checklist, poor management, or time management. Healthcare facilities strive to provide patients with services in a safe and healthy environment. Lack of communication in the transfer process is one of the leading causes of reduced safety, service quality, and patient dissatisfaction.

Mulfiyanti and Satriana (2022) studied the impact of the SBAR communication transfer tool. Effective SBAR communication can also improve hospital service quality, reduce errors, and increase patient safety and satisfaction, impacting healthcare turnover.

Alruwaily (2021) addressed patient safety. The result was using SBAR to improve patient safety within healthcare disciplines for patients of various age groups. The study strongly recommends using the SBAR tool in routine nursing practice in interdisciplinary collaboration, communication, and transfers – even if the system requires more extensive information in clinically complex situations. He hopes that adopting and using SBAR with the review results will significantly improve patient safety both nationally and internationally.

Rehm et al. (2021) conducted a randomised observational study, compared transfer protocols, and evaluated the paper and electronic forms of the SBAR communication tool. Electronic data transmission is the future of healthcare, and the implementation of such tools must be accompanied by an iterative improvement cycle. It must be reliable and easy to use. Critical factors in poor transfer processes are reduced team performance, distractions, and noise. Every member of the

care team should participate in information transfer. Human error appears to be a significant factor in unreliable data processing. The software is too complicated, and multitasking is a stressful and error-prone process. The conclusion recommends more flexible development of control mechanisms.

An analytical study by Supriadi et al. (2020) aimed to determine the relationship between a standardised SBAR tool and the application of safety. They concluded that there was a significant relationship between the SBAR communication method and the implementation of patient safety. They expect improvement in implementing SBAR and patient protection from adverse events. The tool can be used for creating hospital management policies. Alruwaily (2021) concluded the same.

The protocol analysis of Pena et al. (2021) reported on the experience of implementing the SBAR tool during transferred patient information transfer. The tool provided activity standardisation in the patient transfer process and improved the work process in the interdisciplinary team.

Yuliyanti et al. (2020) presented the result of a difference test designed for an experimental group of nurses. This aimed to find the effect of SBAR implementation on nurses' satisfaction. The SBAR method statistically significantly increases nurses' job satisfaction. Its application can be recommended as a standard communication tool with systematic training.

Shahid and Shumesh (2018) summarized a review of studies of the SBAR communication tool. They emphasised that a critical factor is patient transfer between healthcare providers while supporting patient continuity and safety. The risk is an effective communication failure. The consequences of unsuccessful communication include errors in medication, inaccurate care plans, and delays in the transfer or discharge to home

care. A structured communication tool is beneficial for effective communication between healthcare professionals and with the patient – and it also eliminates adverse events. The study aimed to review communication and the SBAR tool during patient transfer and compare it to other tools. The results presented multidimensional problems influenced by technology, personnel, process, information design, and external influences. SBAR provides a structured format for presenting information in a logical order. Therefore, the author recommends focusing further research on assessing the impact of the SBAR tool on the patient and comparing it with other communication tools, especially the I-PASS.

Conclusion

After examining scientific publications and analysing the results, we can conclude that the standardised SBAR form is an effective tool for transferring information during patient transfer. Patient safety and the quality of care increase, provided the health professionals are adequately trained. Communication about information transfer in healthcare facilities is poor, and the quality of the transferred information requires further research and focus on specific clinical fields and healthcare work positions. The available research shows it is impossible to generalise the use of the SBAR communication transfer tool to all clinical workplaces.

Ethical aspects and conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

Předávání informací při překládání pacienta prostřednictvím komunikačního nástroje SBAR

Souhrn

Cíl: Sekundární analýza zdrojů týkajících se předávání informací při překládání pacienta pomocí komunikačního nástroje SBAR. **Metody:** Vyhledávání probíhalo s využitím vědeckých databází CINAHL, MEDLINE, PubMed, EBSCO Discovery Service, Google Scholar, Science Direct a ProQuest v období od září 2022 do února 2023. Nalezli jsme 1 262 odborných článků. Po vyhodnocení relevance publikací jsme použili 17 odborných publikací v angličtině.

Výsledky: Můžeme konstatovat, že standardizovaný formulář SBAR je účinným nástrojem pro předávání informací při překládání pacienta. Bezpečnost pacientů a kvalita péče se zvyšuje za předpokladu, že zdravotníci jsou dostatečně vyškoleni. Komunikace ohledně přenosu informací ve zdravotnických zařízeních je špatná a kvalita přenášovaných informací vyžaduje další výzkum a zameření na konkrétní klinické obory a pracovní pozice ve zdravotnictví.

Závěr: Z dostupných výzkumů vyplývá, že není možné zobecnit použití komunikačního nástroje SBAR na všechna klinická pracoviště. Nebyla nalezena jednoznačná shoda, ale přijetí nástroje SBAR je z výsledků výzkumu patrné.

Klíčová slova: bezpečná péče; efektivní komunikace; předávání informací; překlad pacienta; SBAR

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