

Communication with mechanically ventilated patients

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Communication with a patient on mechanical ventilation is a significant challenge in intensive care units¹. It is one of the most important needs of the patient to exchange information and develop a relationship of trust². Due to the inability to communicate verbally, patients often feel a loss of identity, control and dignity. On the other hand, nurses and other staff in contact with the patient also experience frustration due to difficulty in understanding the patient's wishes, attitudes and needs^{2,3}. When effective and empathetic communication is established, patients feel safer, calmer and more actively involved in their own care and treatment.

In practice, there are several ways and aids for communication. Lip reading, gesturing, writing on paper and communication boards are often not enough due to patient's physical weakness, fatigue, tremors and other difficulties. Technological developments have enabled application of alternative and augmentative methods, such as devices that track eye movements and mobile applications. Applying these solutions can significantly reduce the feeling of isolation and increase the patient's self-confidence. Successful communication requires, in addition to high and low technological solutions, a positive attitude, empathy, patience, presence, openness and the willingness of the staff to devote time and attention to the patients. Education about verbal and nonverbal communication and the use of available aids further contributes to the patient feeling understood and respected, thus improving the quality of care and emotional recovery.

Communication with patients on mechanical ventilation should not be neglected. A combination of low and high-tech solutions, professional education, and an empathetic and patient approach ensures better cooperation, reduces stress, strengthens trust between patient and staff, and contributes to a faster patient recovery.

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LITERATURE

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