

## ASSESSMENT OF NURSES' KNOWLEDGE REGARDING THE NURSING PROCESS AND BARRIERS TO ITS APPLICATION IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE HOSPITALS OF BAHAWALPUR AND LODHRAN

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### Abstract

The nursing process is an essential framework for delivering effective and quality patient care. However, its proper application in clinical settings is often influenced by multiple factors. This study was conducted to assess nursing knowledge regarding the nursing process and the barriers to its application in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran.

A cross-sectional study designed was employed and data were collected from 130 nurses using a structured questionnaire. The tool included section on demographic characteristics, knowledge of the nursing process and perceived barriers. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores.

The finding indicated that the majority of nurses had adequate knowledge of the nursing process and acknowledged its role in improving patient care. Despite this, a considerable proportion of nurses reported difficulties in applying the nursing process in practice. The most commonly reported barriers included staff shortage, heavy workload and lack of time. Additional challenges such as lack of training, insufficient management supports, and low motivation were also identified. While factors like complex documentation and lack of doctor cooperation were considered less significant.

The study concluded that although nurses possess sufficient knowledge, the practical application of the nursing process is limited due to organizational and systemic barriers. Addressing these challenges through improving staffing, continuous professional training, and enhanced administrative support is essential to promote effective implementation and improves patient care outcomes.

### INTRODUCTION

The nursing process is a systematic, patient-centered approach that guides nurses in

delivering safe, effective, and evidence-based care.

It consists of five essential steps: assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and

evaluation. Proper application of the nursing process improves patient outcomes, enhances communication among healthcare professionals, and ensures continuity of care. Despite its importance, the nursing process is not consistently applied in many healthcare settings, particularly in developing countries where resource limitations and workload challenges affect nursing practice (Tayyib and Alsolami, 2026).

Nurses play a vital role in implementing the nursing process in hospital settings. Effective implementation requires adequate knowledge, clinical competence, and supportive organizational environments. However, studies indicate that nurses often face challenges such as heavy workload, insufficient staffing, lack of training, and inadequate documentation systems, which limit the application of the nursing process in clinical practice (Van Hecke et al., 2026).

Previous international studies have examined nurses' knowledge and barriers related to nursing process implementation. (Alsadaan and Ramadan, 2025) reported that lack of time, limited leadership support, and insufficient training significantly reduce nurses' ability to apply structured nursing care. Similarly, (Tayyib and Alsolami, 2026) found that staffing shortages and organizational constraints negatively affect nursing process implementation in tertiary care hospitals.

Research also highlights that nurses' knowledge plays a crucial role in effective nursing process application. (Mehra et al., 2025) reported that nurses with higher knowledge levels were more likely to implement evidence-based nursing practices. Similarly, (Sharma et al., 2025) found that although nurses demonstrated moderate knowledge, actual application of the nursing process remained inconsistent due to systemic barriers.

Several studies further identified barriers to effective nursing practice. (Shi et al., 2026) reported that lack of training, high workload, and absence of standardized guidelines are major obstacles to clinical care implementation. Likewise, (Hayek et al., 2025) found that insufficient educational support and limited

resources negatively affect nursing performance and patient care quality.

Institutional and organizational factors also influence nursing process implementation. (Owusu et al., 2025) reported that access to resources, supportive leadership, and positive work environments improve nursing practice. Similarly, (Ambushe, Wallis and Stassen, 2025) emphasized that teamwork, leadership support, and availability of clinical resources enhance healthcare delivery.

In Pakistan, limited research has focused specifically on nurses' knowledge regarding the nursing process and barriers to its application. (Danish et al., 2025) reported a theory-practice gap among nurses in Bahawalpur hospitals, indicating challenges in applying theoretical knowledge into clinical practice. Similarly, (Shafiq et al., 2025) identified inconsistencies between nursing education and clinical practice in South Punjab.

Given the importance of the nursing process in improving patient care and the limited research conducted in Southern Punjab, particularly in Bahawalpur and Lodhran, this study aims to assess nurses' knowledge regarding the nursing process and identify barriers to its application in public and private hospitals. The findings will help identify knowledge gaps and barriers, contributing to improved nursing education, policy development, and patient care quality.

#### RESEARCH GAP

Although the nursing process is considered a fundamental component of professional nursing practice, its application remains inconsistent across healthcare settings. International studies have identified several barriers including workload, lack of training, and limited institutional support affecting nursing process application (Tayyib and Alsolami, 2026; Alsadaan and Ramadan, 2025). However, most of these studies were conducted in developed countries and may not reflect the challenges faced in developing healthcare systems.

Previous research has also highlighted the importance of nurses' knowledge in implementing the nursing process. (Mehra et al.,

2025) emphasized the role of knowledge and competence, while (Shi et al., 2026) identified systemic barriers such as lack of guidelines and staffing shortages. However, limited studies have assessed both nurses' knowledge and barriers simultaneously.

In Pakistan, available studies mainly focus on general nursing competencies and theory-practice gaps. (Danish et al., 2025) reported significant gaps between knowledge and practice in Bahawalpur hospitals, while (Shafiq et al., 2025) highlighted inconsistencies in nursing education and clinical practice in South Punjab. However, there is limited research specifically assessing nurses' knowledge regarding the nursing process and barriers to its application in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by assessing nurses' knowledge regarding the nursing process and identifying barriers to its application in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran, Pakistan.

### RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of nurses' knowledge regarding the nursing process in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran?
2. What are the barriers to the application of the nursing process among nurses in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran?

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To assess level of nurses' knowledge regarding the nursing process in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran?
2. To assess the barriers to the application of the nursing process among nurses in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran?

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NURSING PROCESS

The nursing process was introduced to standardize nursing care and improve patient outcomes. Initially, nursing care was task-oriented with limited patient assessment and documentation. Over time, nursing evolved into a scientific and patient-centered profession.

The nursing process developed as a structured framework consisting of assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation. This approach allowed nurses to provide individualized care based on patient needs rather than routine tasks. Today, the nursing process is a fundamental component of nursing education and clinical practice worldwide.

Despite global acceptance, implementation challenges still exist, particularly in developing countries where workload, staffing shortages, and lack of training affect nursing practice (Tayyib and Alsolami, 2026).

### KNOWLEDGE REGARDING NURSING PROCESS

Knowledge plays a critical role in nursing process implementation. (Alanizi et al., 2025) reported moderate knowledge among nurses but identified gaps in clinical application. Similarly, (Sharma et al., 2025) found that nurses were aware of the nursing process but inconsistently applied it in clinical settings.

(Danish et al., 2025) also reported a theory-practice gap among nurses in Pakistan, highlighting deficiencies in applying theoretical knowledge into practice. These findings suggest that improving knowledge is essential for better nursing process application.

### BARRIERS TO NURSING PROCESS APPLICATION

Several studies have identified barriers affecting nursing process implementation. (Shi et al., 2026) reported workload, lack of training, and absence of guidelines as major barriers. Similarly, (Hayek et al., 2025) identified limited resources and insufficient staffing as obstacles to effective nursing practice.

(Tayyib and Alsolami, 2026) also reported organizational barriers including lack of time, documentation systems, and leadership support affecting nursing process application.

### CONTROVERSY IN LITERATURE

Despite recognition of the nursing process, debate exists regarding its implementation. Some studies report adequate knowledge among nurses,

while others report poor application in clinical settings. (Sharma et al., 2025) reported moderate knowledge, whereas (Tayyib and Alsolami, 2026) identified significant barriers.

Additionally, controversy exists regarding whether individual knowledge or organizational barriers play a greater role in poor implementation. These conflicting findings highlight the need for context-specific research in Pakistan.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a cross-sectional descriptive survey design to assess nurses’ knowledge regarding the nursing process and barriers to its application in public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran. The target population comprised registered nurses working in these hospitals, and a total of 130 nurses were selected using a convenience sampling technique. The sample size was calculated using the Cochran formula. Inclusion criteria included staff nurses with General Nursing Diploma, Post RN BScN, and Generic BScN qualifications, having at least 12 months of clinical experience. Nursing interns, LHVs, CNAs, nurses absent during data collection, and those unwilling to participate were excluded from the study. Data were collected using a structured, validated questionnaire adopted from (Hagos et al., 2014), which assessed socio-demographic characteristics,

nurses’ knowledge regarding the nursing process, and perceived barriers to its application. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: Section A included socio-demographic information, Section B assessed knowledge, and Section C evaluated barriers. Data were collected anonymously to ensure confidentiality. The main study variables included nurses’ knowledge and barriers to nursing process application. Collected data were entered and analyzed using SPSS version 27.0.1. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of Shahida Islam Nursing College, Lodhran, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality of the data was maintained throughout the study.

**RESULTS**

The results and interpretation of the data pertaining to the present study were presented in this chapter. The chapter focused on three main areas: demographic characteristics, knowledge and barrier regarding nursing process. A structured, validated questionnaire was used to collect data from 130 staff nurses of public and private hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran. The collected data were entered and analyzed using SPSS version 27.0.1. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation, were used to summarize the findings.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

Table 4.1 Demographic profile of participants (n=130)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	20-25	53	40.8
	26-30	28	21.5
	31-35	22	16.9
	>36	27	20.8
Gender	male	80	61.5
	female	50	38.5
Qualification	Diploma	30	23.1
	BS.Nursing	71	54.6
	Post RN	29	22.3
Experience	<1	31	23.8
	5-1	86	66.2
	>10 years	13	10.0

Department	icu	13	10.0
	Medical	58	44.6
	surgical	18	13.8
	emergency	24	18.5
	others	17	13.1
Training	yes	60	46.2
	no	70	53.8

Table:04 .1 results indicate that most participants were young nurses age between 20-25years. The majority were male and held a Bs nursing degree. Most nurses have 1-5 years of experiences and

were working in medical units. More than half of the participants had not received formal training.on the nursing process.

### KNOWLEDGE REGARDING NURSING PROCESS

#### 4.2 Table Knowledge assessment:

Variable	Yes n (%)	No n (%)
Know steps	93 (71.5%)	37 (28.5%)
Apply process	87 (66.9%)	43 (33.1%)
Improves patient care	83 (63.8%)	47 (36.2%)
Care plan writting	78 (60.0)	52 (40.0%)
Part of protocol	91 (70.0%)	39 (30.0%)

The finding reveal that the majority of nurses had basic knowledge regarding the nursing process. Most participants were aware of its steps and its

importance in improving patient care. However a significant proportion lacked knowledge related to care plan writing and practical application.

### BARRIERS TO NURSING PROCESS IMPLEMENTATION:

#### Table 4.3:Barriers with mean scores.

(scale= 1 strongly disagree,5= strongly agree)

Barriers	Means	Interpretation
Staff shortage	3.85	Very high
Heavy workload	3.66	high
Lack of time	3.65	high
Lack of training	3.13	moderate
Poor management support	2.98	moderate
Lack of motivation	2.95	moderate
Lack of resources	2.47	Low moderate
Complex documentation	2.36	low
Lack of doctor cooperation	2.36	low

The results indicate that staff shortage was the most significant barrier, followed by heavy workload and lack of time .Moderate barriers included lack of training, motivation and management support. Factors such as documentation complexity and doctor cooperation were perceived as less significant.

The finding of this study indicate that the majority of nursing working in tertiary care hospitals of Bahawalpur and lodhran are young moderately experienced and academically qualified. Although most participants demonstrated adequate knowledge regarding the

nursing process. Its practical implementation remains limited.

The major barriers identify in this study include staff shortage, heavy workload and lack of time which significantly affect the affective implementation of the nursing process. Additionally lack of training, poor management support and low motivation also contribute to the problem.

Overall the results highlight that while knowledge of the nursing process exists among nurses. Systemic and organizational challenges hinder its proper application in clinical practice.

#### DISCUSSION:

The present study was conducted to assess the barriers and facilitator gaps in the implementation of the nursing process among nurses working in tertiary care hospitals of Bahawalpur and Lodhran, Pakistan. The demographic finding of this study revealed that the majority of participants in this study were young nurses with relatively less experiences. This finding is consistent with previous studies conducting in developing countries, where a large proportion of the nursing workforce consists of early career-nurses. For instance a study conducted in Ethiopia reported that most nurses were within younger age group and had limited clinical experience, which may influence their ability to effectively implement the nursing process (Hagos et al., 2014).

In term of knowledge the majority of nurses were aware of nursing process and its importance of improving patient care. However, despite having knowledge, a considerable proportion of nursing were unable to apply it effectively in clinical practice. This finding is supported by Baraki et al. (2017) who also reported a gap between knowledge and practice among nurses.

In term of barriers staff shortage was identified as the most significant factor affecting implementation. This finding is in line of previous research which identified inadequate staffing as a major challenge in health care setting (Miskir and Emishaw, 2018). Similarly heavy workload and lack of time were also reported as major barriers, indicating that increased work

pressure limit nurses ability to implement the nursing process effectively. (Adraro and Mengistu, 2020). Furthermore lack of training was highlighted as an important barrier in this study. This is consistent with finding from previous studies, which emphasize that proper training and continue education are essential for effective implementation of the nursing process. (Alebachew Bayih and Ayalew, 2021). In addition poor management support and low motivation were found to moderately affect implementation, which is also supported by existing literature highlighting the importance of administrative support.

On the other hand, factors such as complex documentation and lack of doctor cooperation were perceived as less significant barriers. Similar finding have been reported in other studies, where organizational and workload - related factors were considered more influential than interpersonal issues. (Hagos et al., 2014)

Overall, the finding of this study are consistent with existing literature, which indicates that although nurses possess knowledge of the nursing process. Its implementation is hindered by systemic barriers such as staff shortage, lack of time and insufficient training.

#### IMPLICATION:

The findings indicates that organizational factors such as staff shortage, workload, and lack of time significantly affect the implementation of the nursing process. This highlights the need of improved staffing, better workload management, and continuous training programs. The study also emphasizes strengthening clinical supervision and developing standardize guidelines to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

Hospitals should ensures adequate staffing and reduce workload to facilitate effective implementation of the nursing process. Regular training and workshops should be conducted to improve nurses skills. Management support and monitoring systems should be strengthened and simplified documentation along with standardized care plans should be

introduced .Future studies are recommended to explore interventional- based strategies.

#### LIMITATION:

This study was limited to selected hospitals, which may affect generalizability. The cross-sectional design does not establish causality. Data were self reported, which may introduce bias ,and limited inferential analysis was conducted

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