

# Communication challenges during hospital discharge of older patients: insights from healthcare professionals



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## 1 Background & Aim

The process of discharging older patients from hospitals is both critical and complex, directly impacting patient safety. Older patients express challenges in retaining medication information from their hospitalisation, and deficits in the quality of the discharge documentation is known to cause confusion among patients/informal caregivers. Understanding communication among stakeholders involved during the hospital discharge process is essential to obtain desirable patient outcomes.

**Aim:** explore communication, especially medication information transfer, at hospital discharge of older patients, from the perspective of healthcare professionals (HCPs) across various healthcare organisations.

## 2 Methods

- Qualitative approach: four focus groups and three interviews, using a semi-structured interview guide.
- Data collection period: 2021.
- Thematic analysis, main themes and sub-themes were identified.

**Included participants (N=23):** HCPs from Swedish hospitals, primary, and municipal care. Purposeful sampling was adopted.



Physicians (n=7)  
3 Hospital physicians  
2 GPs  
2 Nursing home physicians

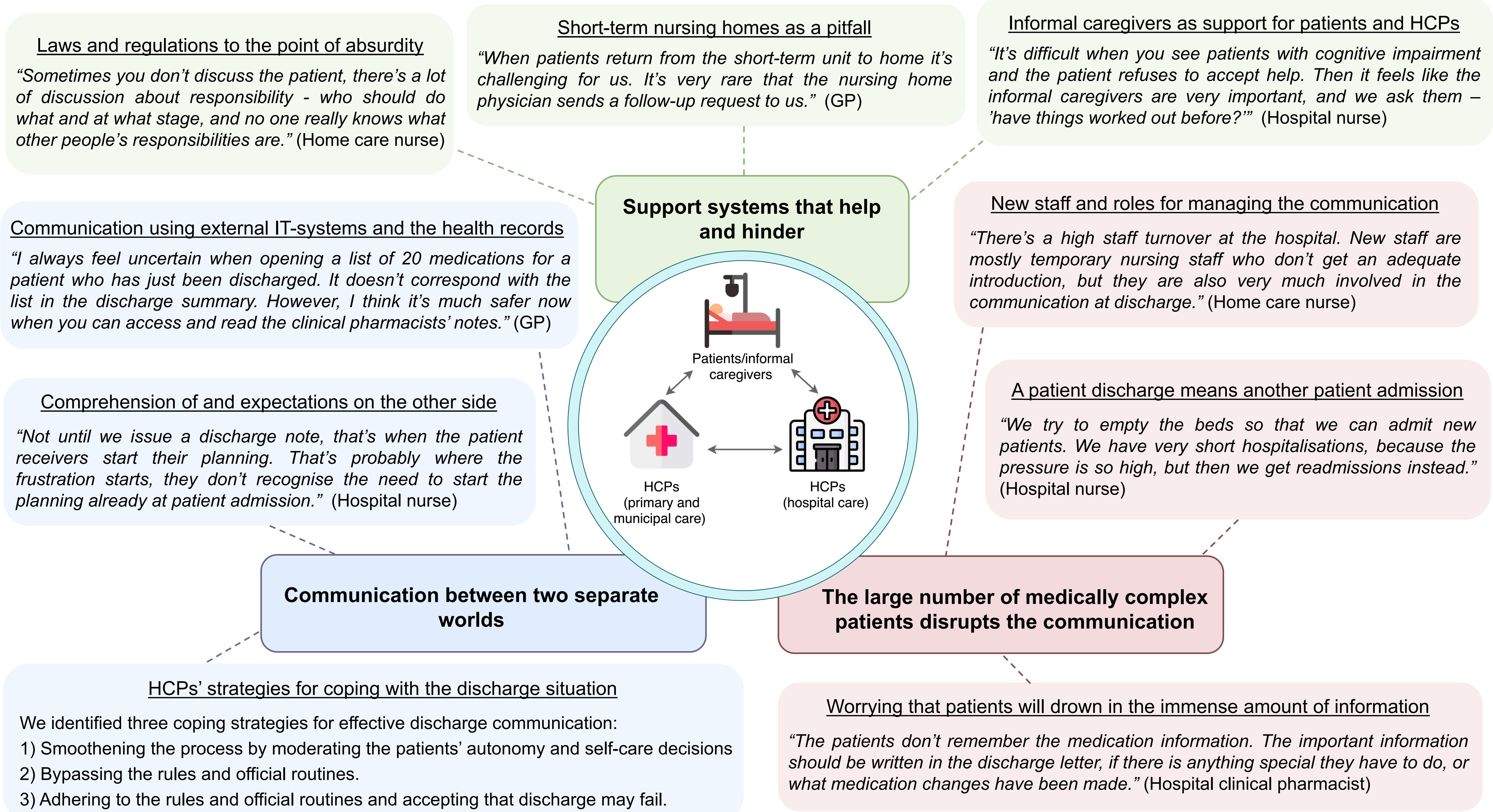


Pharmacists (n=4)  
2 Hospital clinical pharmacists  
2 Primary care clinical pharmacists



Nurses (n=12)  
6 Hospital nurses  
2 Primary care nurses  
2 Nursing home nurses  
2 Home care nurses

## 3 Main themes & sub-themes



## 4 Conclusions

This study highlights the complex nature of hospital discharge of older patients. Communication at hospital discharge is hindered by the fragmented, highly pressurised healthcare system, posing a risk to patient safety. HCPs face challenges in managing the communication

difficulties and, as a consequence, are at risk of moral distress. Therefore, developing and implementing improved communication practices during hospital discharge is crucial for the benefit of both patients and HCPs.

