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## Editor's Prelude

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## Editor's Preamble

The impetus for creating this journal was my observation of nurses 16 years ago at Children's Hospital and Research Center, Oakland California, where my oldest daughter—then nine—was a patient. During this five-week period, I witnessed nurses with their patients and discerned that approximately 95% of this patient-care time was spent *talking*. I pondered whether there was any other profession expected to create a greater array of messages, with each type being vitally important. Moreover, I contemplated what type of communication training nurses received to prepare them for much of their working day. My perusal of nursing school curricula suggested that there are remarkably few-to-no courses devoted to communication or helping nurses design messages inherent in health care. Instead, nurses typically receive nearly all their communication training on the job—hit or miss—with live patients.

Nurses are predominant among health care professionals. They spend the most time and engage in the majority of patient interactions and are evaluated on their communication skills, yet they receive no formal education on the complex and vital challenge of communicating in this fraught context; and, they have scant resources to consult. In my experiences with articles in nursing journals, nearly every publication focused on nursing care says something like “nursing is communication” or “communication is essential to nursing,” yet there is no journal devoted to this critical work in which nurses are engaged for the majority of their work day.

The Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) is the metric by which nurses are evaluated and is essentially a measure of *patient satisfaction*. As many health care professionals are aware, there are only three scales used to appraise the degree to which patients are satisfied with their nurses: (a) “how often did nurses treat you with courtesy and respect?” (b) “how often did nurses listen carefully to you?” (c) “how often did nurses explain things in a way you could understand?”. These are *communication* behaviors, *communication* skills, that are seldom taught.

These considerations have led me, with help and unwavering support from colleagues, to create this journal. As founder and executive editor, I wanted the focus of this journal to be nursing communication—the factors that impact the purpose, goal, design, processing, and effectiveness of communication by nurses in the healthcare context. *Nursing Communication* is a long-needed and essential area of research inquiry that puts communication at the crux of nursing practice. Appropriately, as we begin this process to better understand nursing communication and positively affect healthcare delivery, this inaugural issue is devoted to literature reviews and research agenda-setting articles. Look for the journal's purview to expand as researchers commit themselves to this vital, focal phenomenon.

I have assembled an incredible cadre of colleagues, scholars from Nursing and Communication, to serve as my associates in this quest to revolutionize nursing by formalizing the study of nursing communication. What follows—the articles in this inaugural issue—is the beginning of this rigorous inquiry.

Respectfully,

Bryan B. Whaley, Ph.D.  
Founder and Executive Editor  
*Nursing Communication*