

Abstract

The study investigated whether physician communication adherence was similar between adult and older adult female patients in a family medicine setting. Additionally, the study investigated whether or not the level of communication adherence was related to patient perceptions of working alliance. Previous research has failed to adequately examine age as a variable in physician-patient communication and has neglected to examine the working alliance within the physician-patient relationship. The sample included 41 adult female, family medicine patients, who agreed to have their appointment with their physician videotaped. The videotaped encounters were coded by trained observers using the Behavioral Science Tape Review Checklist (BSTRC). Participants also completed the Working Alliance Inventory-Short Form (WAI-SF). Results from the study suggested that physician adherence to communication tasks did not vary significantly between adult patients and older adult patients. Further, results demonstrated that the combination of responses to the bond and tasks subscales of the WAI-SF significantly accounted for 16% of the variance in communication adherence.