

# SHAPING PATIENT EDUCATION IN RURAL HOSPITALS: LEARNING FROM THE EXPERIENCES OF PATIENTS

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*Patient education is a crucial aspect of nursing practice, but much of the research about it is quantitative and has been conducted in urban medical centers. These urban-based studies have limited utility for nurses working in rural hospitals where the populations they serve often have unique and challenging health contexts and cultures. Since rural residents value knowledge that comes from within their own culture, we used phenomenology and hermeneutics to learn from patients about their experiences of receiving patient education in rural hospitals. Fifteen patients, 7 females and 8 males from 4 rural hospitals participated in non-structured, audio-recorded interviews where we asked them to describe their experiences of receiving patient education. The findings emphasize the need for patients to receive patient education in ways that help them be self-reliant. The findings also suggest the need to involve family members as co-educators when providing patient education to patients hospitalized for familial chronic illnesses.*