

INTRODUCTION

Nurses come to health care profession with misunderstanding of patients' expectations of nursing service quality. Ignoring or misunderstanding of these expectations from nurses is equivalent to sending them to the competition with patients. Furthermore, if the organizations (administrators, nurses and physicians) fail to be sufficiently aware to what patients really expect, this leads to depress any initiative or improvement intention, and to avoid this problem all health care providers need to really determine patients' expectations (**Swayne et al., 2006**).

Nursing service quality refers to an overall judgment of a particular service, and there is a difference between expected quality and perceived quality. Moreover, the nursing service quality is a critical component of patients' perceptions of value that determines their satisfaction (**Chunlaka, 2010**).

Expectations in the health care services are defined as cognitive beliefs about future roles, processes, outcomes, and service quality related to the health care service encounter. Such beliefs involve fundamental uncertainty and are dependent upon psychosocial, behavioral experience and responses. However, expectations will change with time and an accumulating knowledge. It has been noticed that increasing quality of care synchronously increases levels of expectations. Patients' expectations refer to all beliefs or attitudes that interact with perceived occurrences to produce care-related evaluations (**Russ, 2006; Athanasiou et al., 2009; Kravitz, 2010**).

Patient expectations and satisfaction are crucial, because these factors can influence both patient health status and medical outcome. Eliciting and

addressing patient expectations of and requests for care are important because they often play a major part in decisions to seek medical help, and increase their adherence to treatment plans which lead to patients satisfaction with care (*Bakar, 2008; Goroll & Mulley, 2009*).

Patient-centered care has become a major concern of health care providers, patient satisfaction with nursing care became a pivotal indicator of the quality of care provided in hospitals, and helping patients to adjust their expectations of a cure is important step in reducing the severity of the condition. However, it is important to provide patients with hope (*Peterson, 2005*).

Nurses play a significant role in delivery of quality patient care. They are the largest component of health care workforce, they spend the most time with patients in health system, and their function in direct patient care with activities involving monitoring patient status, administering physiologic therapies, executing nursing and educating patients are essential for patients to receive high quality care. Understanding nurses' perceptions of the quality of care is important because it reflects their beliefs which affects initiation of work, effort expenditure and work performance. (*Hall & Doran, 2004; Page, 2004*).

Significance of the Study

Identifying the difference between nurses' perceptions and patients' expectations of nursing service quality is important issue because it reflects what nurses believe in quality of patient care and what nursing care will satisfy the patients. In Egypt, few studies have explored patients' expectations and nurses' perceptions of nursing service quality, so this study was conducted to determine whether there are differences between nurses' perceptions and patients' expectations of nursing services.