

## Exploring Clinical Competency Enhancement through Continuing Professional Development: A Qualitative Study of Dialysis Nurses in Marawi City, Philippines

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### Abstract

**Background:** Professional development is widely recognized as crucial for improving and refining the clinical skills and knowledge of healthcare providers. Continuing professional development (CPD) programs play a vital role in ensuring that healthcare professionals, including those working in the field of hemodialysis, can continuously expand their expertise and deliver high-quality patient care. **Objectives:** This study explores the perspectives of dialysis nurses on CPD programs in Marawi City, Philippines focusing on their experiences and challenges. **Methods:** A qualitative, phenomenological approach was utilized, involving in-depth interviews with ten hemodialysis nurses from various healthcare facilities in Marawi City, Philippines. Participants were selected based on their experience in dialysis care. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and capture the essence of their experiences with CPD programs. **Results:** Key themes that emerged include (1) Impact of CPD on Clinical Practice, (2) Essential Skills and Knowledge Areas in CPD Programs, and (3) Barriers to CPD Participation. CPD programs were reported to enhance clinical practice, improving infection control, patient monitoring, and equipment proficiency, while fostering increased confidence, self-efficacy, and career development. Essential skills identified for CPD programs included life-saving techniques, aseptic practices, and hemodialysis-specific knowledge. The barriers to CPD participation included demanding schedules, high costs, limited local programs, long-distance travel, poor internet access, and lack of organizational support, all contributing to low trust in CPD programs. **Conclusion:** The findings point to the need for tailored, accessible, and practical CPD programs that are specifically designed to address the unique challenges faced by nurses in rural settings, ultimately enhancing the quality of care they provide.

**Keywords:** Continuing professional development, clinical competency, Hemodialysis Nurses, phenomenology, Marawi City

## Introduction

The need for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in nursing has gained increasing recognition worldwide, particularly in specialized fields such as hemodialysis nursing. As healthcare demands evolve, nurses must continuously update their knowledge and skills to provide optimal patient care. However, the accessibility and effectiveness of CPD programs are often challenged in rural and underserved areas, where healthcare infrastructure may be limited. This lack of access to relevant and localized training opportunities can significantly impact the ability of healthcare workers to provide optimal care (Hudson et al., 2020).

In rural settings such as Marawi City in the Philippines, healthcare workers face unique barriers in accessing CPD programs, including financial constraints, geographical isolation, and limited availability of specialized training programs. These barriers can hinder the professional growth and clinical competency of nurses, especially in fields like dialysis nursing, which requires continuous learning and skill development (Waterfield & Barnason, 2022; Robertson et al., 2021). While international studies emphasize the benefits of CPD for nursing practice, especially in enhancing clinical skills and improving patient outcomes (Gould et al., 2023; Vázquez-Calatayud et al., 2023), there remains a significant gap in research regarding the experiences and challenges of nurses in rural and resource-limited settings, particularly in the Philippines.

This study seeks to address this gap by exploring the lived experiences of hemodialysis nurses in Marawi City, focusing on their perceptions of CPD programs and how these programs impact their professional competencies. By adopting a phenomenological approach, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of the challenges nurses face in accessing and engaging with CPD, as well as the potential benefits of tailored, localized training programs to enhance their skills and improve patient care outcomes in rural healthcare settings.

## Research Methodology

### Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of hemodialysis nurses in Marawi City, Philippines, regarding Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs. Phenomenology focuses on understanding how individuals perceive and make sense of their lived experiences (Creswell, 2013). By using this approach, the study aims to capture the essence of participants' experiences with CPD and their impact on clinical competencies in rural settings.

### Population and Sampling

The population for this study consisted of 15 hemodialysis nurses who worked in healthcare facilities in Marawi City, BARMM, Southern Philippines. These nurses were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to target individuals who have direct experience with the phenomenon under study.

(Palinkas et al., 2015). The goal was to obtain valuable insights into their perceptions and experiences.

The participants were chosen based on specific inclusion criteria: they had at least six months of experience in hemodialysis care, ensuring that they were familiar with the clinical demands and professional development requirements in this specialized field. Additionally, the nurses were required to be actively working in hemodialysis settings within Marawi City and to be willing to share their experiences related to CPD programs. Nurses who were not currently working in hemodialysis care or lacked sufficient exposure to CPD were excluded from the study.

**Table 1:**  
Key Descriptions of Respondents

Participant	Age	Sex	Hemodialysis Center	# of Years as Dialysis Nurse
Aleezah	24	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	5 months
Farrah	31	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	3 years
Samantha	32	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	10 years
Fathma	22	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	2 years
Harah	28	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	4 years
Norhisam	34	Male	Amaipakpak Medical Center	5 years
Sheila	27	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	5 years
Rasmia	32	Female	Dr. Abdullah Hospital	8 years
Amanah	31	Female	Dr. Abdullah Hospital	1 year
Rohanah	31	Female	Marawi Hemodialysis Inc.	1 year
Zainab	33	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	7 years
Jameela	30	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	6 years
Khadijah	26	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	3 years
Hanan	29	Female	Amaipakpak Medical Center	2 years

Participant	Age	Sex	Hemodialysis Center	# of Years as Dialysis Nurse
			Center	
Faisal	36	Male	Dr. Abdullah Hospital	9 years

### Instrument and Validity of Research Instrument

The research instrument for this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to gather qualitative insights into the experiences and challenges faced by hemodialysis nurses regarding Continuing Professional Development (CPD). The guide consisted of open-ended questions divided into four sections: demographic information, experience with CPD programs, impact on clinical competency, and suggestions for improvement. This approach allowed flexibility for participants to share detailed personal experiences while addressing the study's key themes (Creswell, 2013).

To ensure the instrument's validity, the interview guide was reviewed by experts in nursing, CPD, and qualitative research. Feedback was incorporated to refine the instrument and ensure it captured the relevant aspects of the research topic. A pilot test was also conducted with a small group of participants to assess the clarity of the questions, and revisions were made based on their feedback. For reliability, inter-rater reliability was tested by having two researchers independently analyze a set of interview data to check for consistency in theme identification. Additionally, data saturation was monitored, ensuring that no new themes emerged after a certain point in data collection, which reinforced the reliability of the findings (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

### Data Collection Methods

Data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews. Prior to the interviews, informed consent was obtained from each participant. Each interview was conducted individually in a quiet, private setting, allowing participants to feel comfortable and open in sharing their thoughts. To facilitate detailed and accurate responses, the interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The interviews lasted between 30 to 45 minutes, providing ample time for the participants to discuss their experiences with CPD programs and its impact on their clinical competencies.

The data collection took place over a five-week period, with 3-4 interviews conducted per week to ensure a manageable workload and achieve data saturation, where no new themes emerged. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically, focusing on identifying recurring patterns and insights related to the participants' professional development experiences.

### **Methods of Data Analysis**

Data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method that identifies and interprets patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis followed six phases. First, the researcher became familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the transcripts. Next, initial codes were generated by labelling relevant data segments, with codes developed inductively to reflect participants' responses. The codes were then grouped into broader themes based on recurring patterns related to the nurses' CPD experiences. The themes were reviewed to ensure accuracy and consistency, with overlapping or unclear themes being refined or removed. Afterward, the themes were clearly defined and named, and the findings were synthesized into a narrative with supporting quotations from participants. Throughout the analysis, data triangulation was employed to ensure the consistency of the findings by cross-checking the results with the original interview data (Creswell, 2013). To enhance the credibility of the findings, peer debriefing was used, where colleagues reviewed the themes and provided feedback. This process ensured the rigor and trustworthiness of the study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the authors university (Approval No. 2024-63) before commencing the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, which included details on the study's purpose, voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the participants' right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. The study adhered to principles of respect, beneficence, and justice as outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013).

The COREQ criteria were followed to ensure transparency and rigor in the reporting of this qualitative research. This included a detailed description of the researchers' roles and perspectives to highlight potential biases (researcher reflexivity), as well as clear documentation of the study's design, participant selection process, data collection methods, and analysis (Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig, 2007). Throughout the interviews, participants were assured of the confidentiality of their responses, and all data were securely stored and anonymized. Additionally, interviews were conducted in a manner that prioritized the comfort and well-being of participants, with any distress promptly addressed.

## Results

Table 2: Summary of Themes and Subthemes

Theme	Subthemes
<b>Theme 1: Impact of CPD on Clinical Practice</b>	<p><b>Subtheme 1.1:</b> Infection Control and Safety Practices</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.2:</b> Proficiency in Equipment Use and Patient Monitoring</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.3:</b> Integration of Evidence-Based Practice</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.4:</b> Application of Theoretical Knowledge in Daily Practice</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.5:</b> Confidence and Self-Efficacy</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.6:</b> Career Development and Increased Responsibilities</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.7:</b> Enhanced Communication and Relationship Building</p> <p><b>Subtheme 1.8:</b> Compassionate, Supportive Care</p>
<b>Theme 2: Essential Skills and Knowledge Areas in CPD Programs</b>	<p><b>Subtheme 2.1:</b> Life-Saving Techniques (BLS/ALS)</p> <p><b>Subtheme 2.2:</b> Aseptic Techniques and Infection Control</p> <p><b>Subtheme 2.3:</b> Hemodialysis-Specific Skills</p> <p><b>Subtheme 2.4:</b> Hands-On Workshops and Simulations</p> <p><b>Subtheme 2.5:</b> Structured Curriculum for Specialized Knowledge</p> <p><b>Subtheme 2.6:</b> Self-Efficacy and Confidence in Clinical Care</p> <p><b>Subtheme 2.7:</b> Flexibility and Accessibility of CPD Programs</p>
<b>Theme 3: Barriers to CPD Participation</b>	<p><b>Subtheme 3.1:</b> Demanding Work Schedules and Family Responsibilities</p> <p><b>Subtheme 3.2:</b> High Costs and Limited Funding for CPD</p> <p><b>Subtheme 3.3:</b> Lack of Local CPD Programs and Long-Distance Travel</p> <p><b>Subtheme 3.4:</b> Limited Internet Access and Technology for Online Learning</p> <p><b>Subtheme 3.5:</b> Limited Organizational Support for Professional Development</p> <p><b>Subtheme 3.6:</b> Lack of Trust in CPD Programs and Organizational Engagement</p>

**Theme 1: Impact of CPD on Clinical Practice**

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plays a significant role in enhancing the clinical skills of healthcare professionals, particularly within specialized fields such as dialysis nursing. The data gathered from participants in this study reveals that CPD programs have a profound impact on clinical practice, improving the competencies, knowledge, and confidence of dialysis nurses, which ultimately leads to better patient care.

**Subtheme 1.1: Infection Control and Safety Practices**

One of the most significant impacts of CPD programs on clinical practice is the improvement in infection control and safety practices. Nurses highlighted that training in infection control techniques, particularly those related to vascular access management and aseptic procedures, has directly influenced their approach to patient care.

As one participant, Harah, explained,

“New techniques learned through CPD have refined my methods in patient monitoring and infection control, which are crucial in dialysis nursing.” - Harah

Another nurse, Farrah, added, “I’ve become more diligent in applying strict aseptic techniques when handling IJ catheters, which is essential in preventing bacterial infections.”

CPD programs focusing on infection control have equipped nurses with the skills to prevent hospital-acquired infections and ensure patient safety, an area crucial in dialysis nursing.

**Subtheme 1.2: Proficiency in Equipment Use and Patient Monitoring**

CPD also plays a crucial role in enhancing nurses' proficiency in using equipment and monitoring patients during dialysis treatments. As Sam, a participant, noted,

“The recent training on infection control and handling dialysis equipment has improved the safety and efficiency of treatments I provide, ensuring better patient outcomes.” - Sam

The continued exposure to new equipment and monitoring techniques through CPD programs ensures that nurses remain proficient in providing high-quality care, enhancing the safety and effectiveness of treatments delivered to patients.

**Subtheme 1.3: Integration of Evidence-Based Practice**

CPD programs also contribute to the integration of evidence-based practices into daily nursing tasks. Nurses consistently pointed out that CPD updates their clinical knowledge with the latest standards and guidelines. For instance, Rasmiashared, “CPD programs contribute to better clinical outcomes by equipping us with updated,

evidence-based practices.” The incorporation of these practices into clinical decision-making processes improves the quality of care, as nurses apply the most current research and methodologies in real-world settings.

#### **Subtheme 1.4: Application of Theoretical Knowledge in Daily Practice**

Theoretical knowledge gained through CPD programs serves to reinforce clinical decision-making, ensuring that nurses are applying the most current and effective practices in patient care. Rasmianoted,

“The theoretical knowledge provided in these sessions also reinforces my clinical decision-making, allowing me to apply updated standards and best practices in my daily tasks.” - Rasmia

This integration of theory into practice helps ensure that nurses are not only up-to-date with the latest scientific knowledge but also confident in applying it to their specific clinical contexts.

#### **Subtheme 1.5: Confidence and Self-Efficacy**

A significant outcome of CPD is the boost in confidence and self-efficacy that nurses experience in their clinical roles. Norhisam shared,

“These programs have not only enhanced my clinical competence but also boosted my confidence, helping me make better decisions.” - Norhisam

By providing nurses with new tools and techniques, CPD programs empower them to make informed and confident decisions, ultimately improving patient care. This increase in self-efficacy contributes to better overall performance and an improved sense of professional accomplishment.

#### **Subtheme 1.6: Career Development and Increased Responsibilities**

CPD also facilitates career growth and the expansion of professional responsibilities. As Rohanah explained,

“CPD programs offer an invaluable opportunity to acquire new skills and broaden our range of responsibilities, which ultimately opens up various career opportunities.” - Rohanah

Nurses emphasized that CPD not only enhances their clinical skills but also increases their chances for career advancement, fostering a sense of professional growth and adaptability in an ever-evolving healthcare environment. Fathma added, “CPD encourages personal and professional growth, helping us stay adaptable in an ever-evolving healthcare environment.”



**Subtheme 1.7: Enhanced Communication and Relationship Building**

Improved communication and relationship-building skills were frequently mentioned by participants as a positive outcome of CPD programs. One participant, Amanah, stated,

“One of the significant changes I’ve experienced through CPD is the improvement in meeting my patients’ needs, particularly through better communication.” - Amanah

These skills are essential in providing comprehensive care, ensuring that patients feel understood, respected, and supported throughout their treatment process. CPD programs also assist nurses in managing their time more efficiently, as noted by Rohanah, who said, “These sessions also help us develop important personal skills, like better communication and time management.”

**Subtheme 1.8: Compassionate, Supportive Care**

Lastly, CPD programs contribute to the provision of compassionate, supportive care. Nurses emphasized that the communication skills they gained through CPD have allowed them to provide not only clinical care but also emotional support to patients. As Aleezah explained,

“The enhanced communication skills have allowed me to better explain treatment plans, address concerns, and provide emotional support.” - Aleezah

This compassionate care is crucial for building trust with patients and fostering a therapeutic relationship, which contributes to improved patient satisfaction and outcomes. Sheila echoed this sentiment, stating,

“By participating in CPD, we not only grow professionally but also feel more confident in our ability to meet the needs of our patients.”

CPD programs significantly influence the clinical practice of dialysis nurses by enhancing their skills, boosting their confidence, and improving patient care outcomes.

**Theme 2: Essential Skills and Knowledge Areas in CPD Programs**

The findings reveal that CPD programs are integral in equipping healthcare professionals, particularly dialysis nurses, with essential skills and knowledge critical to their practice. The data gathered highlights the importance of specific competencies that CPD programs aim to address, ensuring that nurses are not only up-to-date with the latest clinical practices but also confident and capable in their roles.

**Subtheme 2.1: Life-Saving Techniques (BLS/ALS)**

A crucial aspect of CPD programs is the training in life-saving techniques, particularly Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS), which are vital for handling medical emergencies.

Participants emphasized the value of these courses in building their confidence in emergency situations. Zainab shared,

“The most beneficial aspects of CPD programs are the updates on Basic Life Support (BLS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) training, as they provide crucial knowledge and techniques for handling patients during resuscitation.” - Zainab

Another participant, Faisal, reflected, “The most valuable ones have been Basic Life Support (BLS) and the Heimlich Maneuver... Knowing how to respond effectively in emergencies gives me confidence, both professionally and personally.” These skills empower nurses to respond quickly and effectively in critical situations, which are a fundamental part of providing quality care in dialysis settings.

**Subtheme 2.2: Aseptic Techniques and Infection Control**

CPD programs also focus heavily on teaching and reinforcing aseptic techniques and infection control, essential elements in dialysis nursing. Nurses noted that updates in infection control practices significantly improve their clinical competency and patient safety. Amanah remarked, “CPD programs significantly contribute to enhancing our clinical competency by teaching and reinforcing strict aseptic techniques.” This emphasis on aseptic procedures ensures that nurses minimize the risk of infection, which is a primary concern in dialysis treatments.

Jameela added,

“Aseptic technique is crucial in ensuring patient safety and preventing infections during procedures.” - Jameela

The continued education in infection control practices enables nurses to apply the most up-to-date methods in preventing infections and improving patient care.

**Subtheme 2.3: Hemodialysis-Specific Skills**

Another key area of focus in CPD is the development of hemodialysis-specific skills, which are vital for the specialized nature of dialysis nursing.

Khadijah highlighted the importance of these focused training sessions, saying,

“The most valuable aspects of CPD programs in enhancing clinical competency are those that provide a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the core elements of hemodialysis nursing.” - Khadijah

These programs ensure that nurses are proficient in specialized procedures and stay current with the latest practices in dialysis care. Hanan noted “CPD programs play a crucial role in enhancing clinical competency by keeping us updated with the latest practices... IV therapy, and various specialized lectures.”. This specialized training equips nurses with the skills necessary to manage complex dialysis treatments effectively.

#### **Subtheme 2.4: Hands-On Workshops and Simulations**

The inclusion of hands-on workshops and simulations in CPD programs has been identified as a key factor in enhancing their effectiveness. These interactive training methods allow nurses to apply theoretical knowledge in practical, real-world scenarios. Faisal emphasized,

“The design and delivery of these programs, especially through hands-on workshops and simulations, significantly enhance their effectiveness by providing real-world, practical experience.” - Faisal

By simulating actual clinical situations, nurses can hone their skills and build confidence before applying them to real patient interactions. Rasmia further noted, “The design of CPD programs, especially when they include practical demonstrations and case studies, makes them more effective by enabling us to directly apply what we learn to real-world clinical situations.” This experiential learning component ensures that nurses are better prepared to manage clinical challenges.

#### **Subtheme 2.5: Structured Curriculum for Specialized Knowledge**

A structured curriculum that covers various facets of specialized nursing knowledge is another important feature of CPD programs. Nurses highlighted the value of a well-rounded approach that ensures comprehensive learning across multiple areas of dialysis care. Fathma shared,

“The well-rounded approach of the program, which addresses various facets of renal nursing, ensures a holistic view that directly contributes to improving the competency levels of nurses in this specialized field.” - Fathma

The structured nature of these programs provides nurses with a clear learning path, which helps reinforce their understanding and practical application of new skills. Aleezah noted, “CPD programs that provide structured learning experiences... help reinforce learning and improve practical application, ensuring we are better equipped to handle real-world clinical challenges.” This comprehensive approach ensures that nurses are not only informed but also capable of delivering high-quality care.

**Subtheme 2.6: Self-Efficacy and Confidence in Clinical Care**

CPD programs significantly enhance nurses' self-efficacy and confidence in their clinical abilities. Many participants emphasized that the skills and knowledge they gained through CPD have allowed them to feel more competent and capable in their roles. Norhisam stated, "Knowing how to respond effectively in emergencies gives me confidence, both professionally and personally, knowing that I'm equipped to help in critical moments."

By providing nurses with updated practices and effective techniques, CPD programs empower them to face challenges with confidence, which positively impacts both their performance and patient outcomes. Elena added, "CPD seminars and webinars have been incredibly helpful in boosting my confidence as a nurse... staying updated with the latest practices."

**Subtheme 2.7: Flexibility and Accessibility of CPD Programs**

Finally, the flexibility and accessibility of CPD programs were highlighted as important factors that contribute to their effectiveness. Nurses noted that whether offered online or in-person, CPD programs are designed to accommodate their schedules, making it easier for them to access training. Rasmia expressed,

"The flexibility of CPD, whether offered online or in person, makes it accessible, and the real-world applications make it even more impactful." - Rasmia

This flexibility ensures that nurses can continue their professional development without interrupting their work-life balance. Rohanah noted, "Online programs are convenient for me, but I also value in-person workshops where I can interact with experts and other nurses," highlighting the balance between convenience and the need for interpersonal engagement in learning.

From life-saving techniques to specialized hemodialysis skills, CPD programs ensure that nurses are equipped with the most current and relevant knowledge. The combination of structured learning, hands-on practice, and flexible delivery methods ensures that nurses not only gain new skills but also build the confidence and competence required for high-quality patient care.

**Theme 3: Barriers to CPD Participation**

While Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programs offer numerous benefits for dialysis nurses, participation in these programs is not without its challenges. The barriers to CPD engagement are multifaceted, ranging from personal and professional constraints to systemic issues within organizations. The data gathered from participants highlights several obstacles that hinder nurses from fully benefiting from CPD programs.

**Subtheme 3.1: Demanding Work Schedules and Family Responsibilities**

One of the most prominent barriers to CPD participation is the conflict between demanding work schedules and family responsibilities. Nurses frequently expressed difficulty in finding time to attend CPD programs due to long shifts and heavy patient loads. Farrah shared,

“Balancing my duties as a dialysis nurse with the demands of CPD sessions can be challenging, especially given our heavy patient load and long shifts.” - Farrah

Many nurses also highlighted the strain of balancing work with family commitments. Rohanah remarked, “Balancing work, family, and professional development can be difficult.” Furthermore, the time required for CPD often encroaches on personal time, leading to a negative impact on work-life balance. Zainab explained,

“The time required for CPD often conflicts with personal time, limiting the time I can spend with my family and affecting my ability to rest and relax.” - Zainab

These factors emphasize the need for more flexible CPD options that can accommodate the personal and professional responsibilities of nurses.

**Subtheme 3.2: High Costs and Limited Funding for CPD**

The financial burden associated with CPD programs is another significant barrier. Many nurses expressed concerns about the high costs of participation, particularly for programs that include workshops or require travel. Faisal noted,

“Financially, some CPD programs or required materials come with costs that aren’t always covered by the organization, making it difficult to attend without a personal financial commitment.” - Faisal

Additionally, the location of CPD seminars often creates financial and logistical challenges. Fathma highlighted, “CPD seminars that include workshops tend to be more expensive and are often held in more developed cities, making them less accessible due to the cost and travel requirements.” These financial barriers limit the ability of nurses to participate in CPD programs, especially those with limited financial resources or those working in areas with fewer opportunities.

**Subtheme 3.3: Lack of Local CPD Programs and Long-Distance Travel**

The limited availability of CPD programs in certain regions, especially in more remote or underserved areas, poses another challenge. Nurses in areas like Marawi reported significant difficulty accessing relevant CPD programs that align with their specific clinical needs. Jameela explained,

“The limited availability of CPD programs in Marawi significantly impacts my ability and decision to participate in them, especially for programs that align

with the specific needs and skills required for dialysis care.” – Jameela

Furthermore, when programs are offered in more distant locations, travel becomes a major obstacle. Sheila stated, “These programs are conducted far from our area, making it difficult to attend without substantial travel, which adds both time and financial strain.” This suggests that local CPD offerings and more accessible options are critical in ensuring broader participation.

#### **Subtheme 3.4: Limited Internet Access and Technology for Online Learning**

The rise of online learning as a flexible option for CPD has been hindered by technological barriers, particularly limited internet access in certain regions. Norhisam described how connectivity issues affect participation:

“The lack of strong internet connectivity makes it difficult to participate in online webinars or virtual training sessions.” - Norhisam

Additionally, even when internet access is available, interruptions such as power outages can disrupt the learning experience. Rasmia shared, “While online options are available, issues like slow internet or sudden power interruptions make it hard to focus on the discussion.” These technological challenges can undermine the effectiveness of online CPD and prevent nurses from benefiting fully from these programs.

#### **Subtheme 3.5: Limited Organizational Support for Professional Development**

Organizational support plays a crucial role in enabling nurses to pursue CPD opportunities. However, many nurses reported that their employers did not provide sufficient backing for professional development, such as flexible scheduling or financial support. Khadijah noted,

“With more flexibility in scheduling and stronger backing from the organization, we would be able to further develop our competencies and provide even better care to our patients.” - Khadijah

This lack of support can result in missed opportunities for skill enhancement and professional growth. Samantha suggested that creating a more supportive environment would encourage ongoing learning:

“Creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for CPD, with better employer backing and flexible opportunities, could greatly enhance ongoing learning and professional growth.” - Samantha

Therefore, increased organizational commitment to CPD is essential to foster a culture of continuous improvement in healthcare settings.

**Subtheme 3.6: Lack of Trust in CPD Programs and Organizational Engagement**

Trust in both the CPD programs and the organizations offering them is critical for successful participation. Several participants expressed concerns about the credibility of certain programs and the engagement of their employers in supporting professional development. Faisal shared,

“When trust is lacking, it can be difficult to fully engage in the learning process or feel confident in applying new knowledge and skills in practice.” - Faisal

Similarly, Rasmia emphasized the importance of trust in fostering a positive learning environment: “Trust is essential in fostering a collaborative learning environment, and without it, participation and the effectiveness of CPD programs can be hindered.” Without trust in the quality of the programs and the organizational commitment to professional development, nurses may be reluctant to engage fully in CPD opportunities.

The findings reveal that Barrier to CPD participation are varied and multifaceted, with nurses facing significant challenges in balancing professional and personal demands, financial constraints, limited access to local programs, and technological barriers. Addressing these issues requires a coordinated effort to provide more flexible, accessible, and supportive CPD opportunities that meet the diverse needs of nurses.

**Discussion**

Continuing Professional Development programs enhance the clinical practice of dialysis nurses, improving patient outcomes and supporting personal and professional growth. The findings highlight the essential function of CPD programs in fostering specialized skills, especially in crucial domains like infection control, equipment handling, and patient interaction - all of which are vital to the success of dialysis nursing. The findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of ongoing education in maintaining high standards of patient care, particularly in specialized fields where the healthcare environment is complex and constantly evolving (Garrick et al., 2023; Hermalia et al., 2021; Yuan et al., 2021)

The study also emphasizes the integration of evidence-based practices into clinical care, an aspect of CPD that is increasingly recognized as vital in ensuring high-quality patient outcomes. Similar to studies by Gallagher-Ford et al. (2023), which explored the integration of evidence-based practices in nursing, our findings suggest that CPD helps bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Nurses in this study reported improved clinical decision-making through the application of the latest research and guidelines, thereby enhancing their ability to provide optimal care.

Despite the clear benefits, the study also identifies several barriers to CPD participation, which are consistent with challenges highlighted in the broader healthcare literature. The most significant barriers include demanding work schedules, high costs, limited access to local programs, and technological difficulties,

which align with findings from Alahiane et al. (2023) on the challenges nurses face in accessing professional development opportunities. The lack of organizational support for CPD, as reported by several participants, mirrors concerns expressed in other studies (Jackson & Manley, 2021; Mlambo et al., 2021; Gbadebo et al., 2018), which call for greater institutional commitment to facilitating continuous learning. Addressing these barriers through flexible, accessible, and well-supported CPD programs is essential to maximize the potential benefits of professional development.

The study's findings further reveal that CPD programs not only enhance clinical competence but also boost nurses' confidence and self-efficacy, which in turn improves their overall performance. This finding is supported by the work of Greco et al. (2022), who posited that self-efficacy is a critical factor in professional performance. Nurses in this study noted that CPD programs empowered them to make informed decisions, leading to improved patient care. This highlights the value of CPD not just in skill development, but in fostering a more confident and capable nursing workforce. This study reaffirms the value of CPD programs in enhancing the clinical competencies of dialysis nurses, improving patient care outcomes, and contributing to professional growth. However, it also emphasizes the need for healthcare organizations to address the barriers preventing full participation in these programs. Future research could explore innovative solutions to these barriers, particularly in underserved regions, to further optimize the effectiveness of CPD in healthcare settings.

### **Conclusion**

This study highlights the role of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in enhancing the clinical competence of dialysis nurses in Marawi City. The findings underscore the importance of accessible, practical, and contextually relevant CPD programs tailored to the unique challenges faced in rural healthcare settings. Addressing barriers such as cost, location, and limited organizational support is crucial for ensuring greater participation and impact. These insights not only contribute to improving healthcare delivery but also serve as a foundation for further research into effective CPD strategies that promote sustainable professional growth and quality patient care in similar settings.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.



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