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The Effect of Therapeutic Communication of Nurses on the Mental Health Condition of Patients in the Inpatient Room

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ABSTRACT

The mental health of patients in inpatient settings is a critical concern in healthcare services, and nurses' therapeutic communication plays an important role in influencing patients' psychological conditions. Limited understanding of this relationship may negatively affect recovery. This study aimed to examine the effect of nurses' therapeutic communication on patients' mental health in the inpatient unit. This study used a quantitative design with a correlational approach. The research was conducted at RSUD M. Natsir Solok, involving 50 inpatients selected through purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria. Data were collected using two instruments: a therapeutic communication questionnaire to evaluate nurse–patient interactions and the Self Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ) to assess patients' psychological and emotional conditions. Data analysis was performed using the chi-square test. Ethical principles were applied by obtaining informed consent and ensuring data confidentiality. The results showed that 70% of patients perceived good therapeutic communication from nurses. Regarding anxiety levels, 50% of patients experienced moderate anxiety and 30% reported high anxiety. The chi-square test indicated a significant relationship between therapeutic communication and anxiety levels ($p = 0.035$). In conclusion, therapeutic communication positively influences patients' mental health, emphasizing the need for structured training to enhance nurses' communication skills.

Keywords: *Communication, Therapeutic, Mental Health, Nursing, Inpatient*

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INTRODUCTION

Mental health is one aspect of health that is no less important than physical health. Poor mental health conditions can affect a person's overall quality of life. In Indonesia, mental health disorders are quite a big problem and are often overlooked. Data from the Ministry of health of the Republic of Indonesia (2020) shows that more than 20 million Indonesians experience mental health disorders, and this figure continues to increase every year. In hospitals, hospitalized patients often face emotional and psychological problems, such as anxiety, stress and depression, which can worsen their physical condition.

The mental health of patients in inpatient room is an important concern because in addition to physical treatment, psychological factors play a major role in the patient's recovery process. The presence of nurses in the inpatient room is vital because nurses have direct opportunities to interact with patients over a long period of time. This interaction, known as therapeutic communication, is a form of communication focused on helping the patient in the healing process both physically and psychologically. Good therapeutic communication can help patients feel calmer, safer and valued, which ultimately has a positive impact on their recovery in mental health (Nursalam, 2020).

However, although the role of therapeutic commu nication has been widely recognized in the world of health, research into the influence of therapeutic communication nurses on mental health conditions of patients is still limited. Many hospitals have not made optimal use of therapeutic communication in their daily practice. A study by Puspitasari et al. (2021) showed that although nurses have training in therapeutic communication, the application of such skills in clinical practice is far from optimal. This can be caused by a variety of factors, such as time pressure, high workload, and a lack of in-depth understanding of effective communication techniques.

On the other hand, hospitalized patients often have emotional disorders that can worsen their physical state of Health. According to research by Subagio et al. (2021), almost 60% of hospitalized patients experience significant anxiety and stress during the treatment period. This condition not only prolongs recovery time, but can also increase the risk of medical complications. Therefore, good therapeutic communication by the nurse can be an important factor in supporting the patient's mental health, which in turn contributes to the improvement of the patient's physical condition.

Mental health care in hospitals is often limited to administering medications and psychological therapy, while aspects of communication between nurses and patients are often neglected. In fact, research shows that good therapeutic communication can reduce patient anxiety and stress (Jaya et al., 2022). Nurses who can communicate with empathy and concern can create a supportive atmosphere for patients to express their feelings and concerns, thus helping to reduce the emotional tension they may feel.

The importance of therapeutic communication in the world of Nursing has been documented in many studies. According to research conducted by Budiastuti (2020), therapeutic

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communication applied appropriately can accelerate the recovery of hospitalized patients and reduce levels of anxiety and depression. In a hospital context, where patients often feel isolated and anxious, therapeutic communication involves not only talking, but also listening, providing emotional support, and creating trust between caregivers and patients.

Based on this, many hospitals are beginning to involve therapeutic communication training as part of the professional development of nurses. However, the effectiveness of this training in influencing the patient's mental health condition still needs to be proven further through more in-depth research. Some previous studies have indeed shown a positive correlation between the quality of nurse communication and the patient's mental health condition, but there is still variability in the results obtained (Tunggal et al., 2020).

Several more recent studies have attempted to explore the relationship between therapeutic communication and the mental health of patients in hospitals, highlighting factors such as nurses ' communication skills, empathic attitudes, and interaction time with patients. One of the studies by Sari et al. (2022) showed that a good quality of therapeutic communication has a direct impact on reducing the anxiety level of postoperative patients. However, this study was conducted in a hospital with a different type of patient, and no study has yet specialized in hospitalized patients with more complex mental health disorders.

Other relevant research by Oktaviani et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of non-verbal communication and active listening skills in improving the quality of nurses ' therapeutic communication with patients. However, the study focused more on non-verbal communication in the critical care setting, whereas this study aimed to look more specifically at how verbal therapeutic communication involving open-ended questions and empathic responses can help reduce inpatient mental health disorders.

Based on the data and previous findings, there is still a lack of research that explores in detail how specific therapeutic communication can reduce the mental health conditions of patients in the inpatient area of regional hospitals. Therefore, this study is important to do in order to clarify the relationship between these two variables, as well as provide empirical evidence that can be the basis for improving mental health services in hospitals.

The urgency of this research is becoming increasingly clear given the increasing number of patients with mental health problems who require medical care in hospitals. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (2022) shows that mental and behavioral disorders are one of the main causes of hospitalization in hospitals in Indonesia. Therefore, more holistic interventions are needed, one of which is through increased therapeutic communication of nurses, to help improve the mental health conditions of patients in inpatients.

Improved therapeutic communication skills by nurses will not only improve the quality of interaction with patients, but also can accelerate the healing process of hospitalized patients. This is very important because patients who feel emotionally supported by nurses can have a greater chance of experiencing a faster physical recovery (Widyaningsih & Putri, 2022).

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In addition, this research also contributes to the development of therapeutic communication theory in nursing, which can provide a clearer picture of how therapeutic communication affects the mental health of patients directly. More in-depth research on the effect of therapeutic communication can also provide recommendations for hospitals in designing training for nurses, so that they can be more effective in interacting with inpatients.

The reason for the interest of researchers to conduct this study is due to gaps in the application of therapeutic communication in hospitals, especially in areas with limited facilities and resources. This study purpose to examine the effect of nurses' therapeutic communication on the mental health conditions of patients in the inpatient unit. Researchers want to uncover how nurses can play a greater role in influencing the mental health of patients through more effective and humane communication. This research is expected to make a significant contribution in improving the quality of patient care, both in large hospitals and regional hospitals.

METHODS

This study uses a quantitative design with a correlational approach, which aims to examine the relationship between therapeutic communication nurses and mental health conditions of patients in the inpatient room. The correlational design was chosen because it allows the researcher to analyze the relationship between the two variables without performing direct intervention or experimental treatment on the patient. The location of the study was conducted at RSUD M. Natsir Solok, a regional hospital that has inpatient facilities and provides mental health care for patients with emotional and psychological disorders. The sample consisted of 50 inpatients who were selected by purposive sampling, with inclusion criteria, namely patients who have been treated for at least 3 days and who meet the criteria for measuring mental health conditions based on the scale used. The exclusion criteria included patients who could not give consent or had physical impairments that prevented participation in the study.

Data collection techniques were performed using two main instruments. The data were collected using two instruments: the nurse therapeutic communication questionnaire to evaluate patient interactions and the Self Reporting Questionnaire (SRQ) as a mental health scale to assess the psychological and emotional state of patients. Prior to data collection, each participant was given a clear explanation of the purpose of the study and the procedure to be followed. The study also adheres to the principles of research ethics, by obtaining the written consent of each respondent after they have been provided with sufficient information about the objectives, procedures, and potential risks of the study. The collected Data were then analyzed using the chi-square test to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the quality of the nurse's therapeutic communication and the patient's mental health condition.

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RESULTS

In this study, the analysis was carried out in two stages, namely univariate analysis to describe the characteristics of the sample and the distribution of data, and bivariate analysis to examine the relationship between therapeutic communication nurses and mental health conditions of patients.

1. Univariate Analysis Results

Table 1. Distribution of Sample Characteristics By Sex, Age, Anxiety Level, and Quality of Therapeutic Communication (n=50)

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Men	20	40%
Female	30	60%
Age		
< 30 years	15	30%
30 - 50 years old	25	50%
> 50 years	10	20%
Quality of Therapeutic Communication		
Good	35	70%
Pretty Good	10	20%
Less Good	5	10%
Anxiety Level		
Height	15	30%
Medium	25	50%
Low	10	20%

The results of table 1 can be seen that most of the respondents in this study are women (60%) with an age range of 30-50 years (50%). The majority of patients (70%) reported that they received good therapeutic communication from nurses during treatment. As for the level of anxiety, most patients had moderate anxiety (50%), and only a few had high anxiety (30%). These Data provide an overview of the characteristics of the sample used in the study and show that most patients feel they are getting enough good therapeutic communication from their caregivers.

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2. The Relationship Between the Quality of Therapeutic Communication of Nurses and the Level of Anxiety of Patients

Tabel 2. The Relationship Between the Quality of Therapeutic Communication of Nurses And the Level of Anxiety of Patients (n-50)

Quality of Therapeutic Communication	Anxiety Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)	p-Value
Good	Height	3	8.57	0.035
	Medium	20	57.14	
	Low	12	34.29	
Pretty Good	Height	5	50.00	
	Medium	4	40.00	
	Low	1	10.00	
Less Good	Height	7	70.00	
	Medium	1	10.00	
	Low	2	20.00	

The results of Table 2 can be seen that there is a significant relationship between the quality of therapeutic communication of nurses and the level of anxiety of patients, with a value of p = 0.035 which is smaller than 0.05. These results showed that patients who received good therapeutic communication tended to have lower levels of anxiety (34.29% with low anxiety), while patients who received poor therapeutic communication were more likely to experience high anxiety (70.00% with high anxiety). This suggests that a better quality of therapeutic communication is associated with a decrease in anxiety in hospitalized patients.

DISCUSSION

The results of univariate analysis showed that most of the respondents in this study were women (60%), with the largest age group in the age range of 30-50 years (50%). The study found a gender and age distribution that reflects the demographic pattern of inpatients in general, where women are treated more than men. Along with that, the anxiety in hospitalized patients measured in this study showed that most patients experienced moderate levels of anxiety (50%), with another 30% experiencing high anxiety. High anxiety in hospitalized patients is a phenomenon that is often encountered in various hospitals.

In this study, the majority of patients (70%) reported that they received good therapeutic communication from nurses. This illustrates the existence of a fairly positive relationship between the quality of communication provided by nurses and the psychological condition of patients. Good therapeutic communication here includes empathic verbal interaction, an attentive attitude, and the ability to listen well.

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According to Sari et al. (2022), anxiety in hospitalized patients is often triggered by the uncertainty of their medical condition, the treatment process they are undergoing, as well as a sense of isolation from their social environment. This shows that inpatients urgently need adequate psychological support, one of which is through effective therapeutic communication. Research by Nugroho and Hidayati (2020) also supports these findings, showing that good therapeutic communication is able to reduce anxiety and increase the patient's sense of security and comfort. Well-established communication between nurses and patients has an important role in supporting the patient's healing process.

Good therapeutic communication can play a role in reducing stress and anxiety in hospitalized patients. This is because empathic communication allows the patient to feel listened to and valued, which in turn increases the patient's confidence level in undergoing the recovery process. This finding is in line with research by Lestari and Sari (2021) which revealed that therapeutic communication carried out by nurses with an empathic approach can relieve emotional tension in hospitalized patients. With good communication, the patient feels more comfortable expressing their concerns, which helps the nurse to provide more effective emotional support.

Furthermore, the results showed that although most patients felt that the therapeutic communication they received was quite good, there were still 20% of patients who felt that their nurse's communication was only good enough, and another 10% felt that the quality of the communication they received was not good enough. This phenomenon reflects the challenges faced by nurses in maintaining the quality of therapeutic communication in stressful situations and time constraints. Research by Rahmawati et al. (2020) showed that high workload factors and limited time are often obstacles for nurses to carry out therapeutic communication optimally. This time constraint can prevent nurses from interacting deeply with patients, which can affect the quality of communication received by patients.

The high level of anxiety in hospitalized patients is often influenced by uncertainty about their state of Health. The results of this study noted that 30% of patients experienced high anxiety, which suggests that there is a portion of patients who feel very worried about their treatment process. This is in line with the results of research by Wulandari et al. (2020) which states that anxiety in hospitalized patients may increase due to lack of adequate information from medical personnel regarding health conditions and medical procedures undergone. Therefore, good therapeutic communication can be key in reducing anxiety by providing clear information and appropriate emotional support.

Most of the patients in the study felt that the therapeutic communication they received was good enough and contributed to the reduction of their anxiety. These findings reinforce the view that the quality of therapeutic communication has a direct effect on the psychological state of patients. Research by Novita et al. (2021) showed that therapeutic communication carried out in a humanistic and empathetic way can reduce anxiety and stress levels in patients undergoing long-

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term treatment. This shows the importance of proper therapeutic communication training for nurses, so that they can be more effective in supporting the mental health of patients.

As a result of this study, it can be concluded that good therapeutic communication has a positive impact on the psychological condition of patients, in particular in reducing their anxiety levels. This shows that therapeutic communication is not just a talking interaction, but also an important tool in improving the quality of patient mental health care. However, although most patients feel they are getting good therapeutic communication, there are challenges in maintaining the quality of this communication amid the stress of the nurse's workload.

In this study, 20% of patients reported that the quality of communication they received was only moderately good. This may be due to the limited time that nurses have to interact with each patient in depth. Research by Maulana et al. (2020) showed that the limited time and busyness of nurses often prevent them from giving full attention to patients in terms of therapeutic communication.

Inequalities in the quality of therapeutic communication received by patients can have an effect on their emotional well-being. Patients who feel that their communication with caregivers is less good tend to experience higher levels of anxiety, which can ultimately slow down their recovery process. Research by Dewi and Rachmawati (2021) found that patients ' dissatisfaction with communication with nurses can increase their anxiety levels, which can hinder the physical and mental healing process. Therefore, improving nurses ' therapeutic communication skills needs to be a priority in hospitals.

In addition, a good quality of therapeutic communication can also affect the patient's self-confidence in the face of their treatment. When nurses are able to communicate with empathy and care, patients feel more valued and more confident in going through the recovery process. This supports research by Andriyani et al. (2020) which shows that good communication with nurses increases patients ' self-confidence in the face of the medical care they undergo.

The assumption that can be taken from the results of this study is that to improve the quality of mental health of patients, therapeutic communication should be considered more seriously by medical personnel, especially nurses. Researchers assume that although most patients feel they have received good therapeutic communication, there is still room for improvement, especially in improving the communication skills of nurses, both verbal and non-verbal. More in-depth and ongoing training in therapeutic communication will help nurses in building more effective relationships with patients, which in turn will improve the quality of care.

The study also assumes that the inability of nurses to provide adequate communication, especially in stressful situations, can lead to patients feeling more anxious and isolated. Therefore, it is important for hospitals to allow nurses enough time to personally interact with patients and listen carefully to their concerns. Overall, these findings provide a clear picture of the importance of therapeutic communication in supporting the mental health of hospitalized patients. With better communication quality, nurses can help patients cope with anxiety and provide the security necessary for recovery.

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The results of bivariate analysis showed a significant relationship between the quality of therapeutic communication nurses with inpatient anxiety levels, with a value of p = 0.035. This indicates that good therapeutic communication can have a direct effect on reducing anxiety in patients. Patients who received good therapeutic communication tended to have lower anxiety, with 34.29% of patients experiencing low anxiety.

These results are in line with the findings of previous studies stating that open and empathic communication can reduce anxiety in hospitalized patients (Sari et al., 2021). Effective therapeutic communication allows patients to feel more calm and empowered, which in turn can help them manage the anxiety they feel during treatment.

This is in line with the theory that therapeutic communication involving empathy, attention, and openness will help patients feel more comfortable and trust in the treatment process they are undergoing. These results suggest that nurses play an important role in creating an atmosphere that supports the mental health of patients. For example, nurses who are able to communicate in a non-judgmental and empathic way can make patients feel more valued, which contributes to a reduction in their anxiety levels (Novita et al., 2020).

Conversely, patients who report poor therapeutic communication tend to experience higher anxiety. As many as 70% of patients who receive poor therapeutic communication experience high anxiety. This phenomenon illustrates that low communication quality has the potential to exacerbate patient anxiety. This is in line with research conducted by Dewi and Rachmawati (2021), which found that the lack of effective communication between nurses and patients can increase anxiety, as patients feel they are not understood or do not get clear information about their condition.

Poor therapeutic communication can be caused by various factors, one of which is the busy schedule of nurses who limit the time to interact with patients in depth. Research by Rina et al. (2020) mentioned that high workload and time pressure are often obstacles in the implementation of optimal therapeutic communication. Nurses who are rushed or poorly trained in communication may not be able to provide sufficient emotional support to the patient, leading to increased anxiety.

Good therapeutic communication focuses not only on verbal conversation, but also on non-verbal communication, such as facial expressions, body language, and eye contact. Nurses who are able to read a patient's emotional needs through non-verbal cues can be more effective in responding and providing the necessary support. Research by Andriyani et al. (2020) showed that mindful non-verbal communication, such as smiling or providing undivided attention, can increase a patient's sense of security and reduce anxiety. Therefore, nurses need to be trained to develop supportive non-verbal communication skills.

From the results of the chi-square test, it can be seen that good therapeutic communication is followed by a significant decrease in anxiety, which reflects the importance of the quality of interaction between the nurse and the patient. This supports the view that the quality of communication depends not only on the words spoken, but also on the way the nurse shows

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empathy and attention to the patient. Research by Hartati et al. (2021) states that therapeutic communication implemented mindfully can reduce patient anxiety by creating a sense of confidence and comfort, which helps patients be better prepared for treatment.

In this study, the relationship between the quality of therapeutic communication and patient anxiety can be understood in the context of interpersonal relationship theory which states that the quality of relationships between individuals can affect their psychological well-being. Good therapeutic communication creates a supportive relationship, in which the patient feels valued and understood, which leads to an improvement in their psychological state. Conversely, poor communication can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, which contributes to increased patient anxiety (Singleton et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the analysis showed that moderately good therapeutic communication corresponded to moderate levels of anxiety. These results show that although the quality of therapeutic communication received by patients is quite good, there is still room for improvement in reducing anxiety. Research by Puspitasari et al. (2021) states that although good therapeutic communication can reduce anxiety, further improvement in communication skills is necessary to provide optimal emotional support for patients. By improving communication skills, nurses can help patients feel safer and more confident in the face of medical care.

The results of the bivariate analysis also reinforce the importance of therapeutic communication in managing patient anxiety, especially in patients who receive good communication. Researchers assume that nurses who have better communication skills can create a more comfortable atmosphere for patients, which will help them cope with feelings of anxiety that arise during the treatment period. Research by Wulandari et al. (2020) revealed that mindful therapeutic communication can create a sense of security for the patient, which in turn reduces anxiety and speeds up the recovery process.

A decrease in anxiety in patients who receive good therapeutic communication can also improve their adherence to the medical care provided. Patients who feel listened to and valued by caregivers tend to be more open to following the medical advice given. Research by Fitriani and Nugroho (2021) states that empathic communication can increase patients ' trust in medical personnel, which can have a positive impact on the level of adherence to treatment and therapy.

On the other hand, patients who experience high anxiety tend to have less confidence in the treatment given. High anxiety often leads to fear or doubt about the treatment process, which can hinder their recovery. This is in accordance with the findings of research by Maulana et al. (2020), who showed that poorly treated anxiety can increase patients ' fear and distrust of the treatment process, which can slow their recovery.

Nurses trained in therapeutic communication have the ability to read signs of anxiety in patients and provide appropriate support. Based on the results of this study, it is clear that good therapeutic communication can help nurses identify patients ' anxiety levels and adjust their approach to provide more comfort. As explained by Lestari and Sari (2021), the skill of nurses in

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communicating with patients greatly affects the quality of interaction, which in turn affects the psychological condition of patients during the treatment period.

In a hospital context, where patients often feel isolated or anxious about their medical condition, effective therapeutic communication is indispensable to create a supportive environment for recovery. Nurses have an important role in reducing patient anxiety by providing clear information and providing adequate emotional attention. According to research by Jaya et al. (2021), good communication can reduce patient stress and anxiety by providing clarity and ongoing emotional support. Factors such as the patient's medical condition, psychological history, and social support also contribute to the anxiety the patient experiences. Research by Putra and Saraswati (2020) emphasizes that anxiety in hospitalized patients is not only influenced by nurse communication, but also by other external factors that need to be considered.

It is important to note that although the results of this study show a significant relationship between the quality of therapeutic communication and patient anxiety, there are many other factors that can influence the level of patient anxiety. Overall, the results of the bivariate analysis in this study confirm the importance of therapeutic communication in managing patient anxiety in the inpatient room. Nurses who are able to communicate well can provide significant emotional support, which helps patients feel safer and more confident in undergoing their medical care. Therefore, hospitals need to provide more in-depth therapeutic communication training for nurses so that they can improve the quality of their interactions with patients, which will ultimately support the patient's mental health.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the univariate analysis in this study showed that the vast majority of patients (70%) reported that they received good therapeutic communication from nurses during treatment. In addition, the majority of patients (50%) had moderate levels of anxiety, with only 30% experiencing high anxiety. The bivariate test conducted using chi-square analysis showed a significant relationship between the quality of therapeutic communication of nurses and the level of anxiety of patients, with a value of $p = 0.035$. Based on these results, it can be concluded that good therapeutic communication has a positive effect on the patient's mental health condition, especially in reducing the anxiety they feel during the treatment period. A better quality of therapeutic communication tends to produce lower levels of anxiety, while less good communication tends to increase the patient's level of anxiety.

Therefore, improving the therapeutic communication skills of nurses in the inpatient room is very important to support the patient's recovery process. Nurses who are skilled in communicating with patients will not only improve the quality of the therapeutic relationship, but also help reduce stress and anxiety that can slow the patient's recovery. This study provides strong evidence that effective therapeutic communication is key in maintaining the mental health of patients and improving their emotional well-being during treatment. However, the limitation of this study is that the samples used are limited to inpatients in RSUD M. Natsir Solok, which may

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not fully reflect the conditions in other hospitals with different characteristics of patients. In addition, the study only measured patient anxiety as an indicator of mental health, while other psychological factors, such as depression or stress, also play an important role in patient well-being and could be the focus of further research.

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