



Analysis of the Implementation of Medical Record Retention Based on Medical Record Officers' Perceptions: A Qualitative Case Study at Siti Rahmah Islamic Hospital Padang

Yulfa Yulia^{1*}, Mila Sari², & Arif Prima³

^{1*}STIKes Dharma Landbouw, Indonesia, ²STIKes Dharma Landbouw, Indonesia, ³STIKes Dharma Landbouw, Indonesia

*Co e-mail: yulfatugas@gmail.com¹

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of medical record retention is an important activity in medical record management to ensure storage efficiency, ease of file retrieval, and compliance with applicable regulations. However, its implementation in hospitals still faces obstacles, such as limited human resources, storage facilities, and officers' understanding of retention procedures. This study aims to analyze the implementation of medical record retention based on the perceptions of medical record officers. Unlike previous studies that focused mainly on compliance with retention procedures, this study explores medical record officers' perceptions to identify organizational and operational barriers affecting retention implementation. This study employed a qualitative case study design at the Medical Record Installation of Siti Rahmah Islamic Hospital Padang involving five informants selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The findings indicate that retention procedures have been implemented but not consistently or according to schedule. The main barriers include varying levels of officers' understanding, limited facilities and storage space, and inadequate monitoring and evaluation. It was concluded that strengthening human resources, facilities, and supervision is essential to optimize medical record retention implementation.

Keywords: Retention, Records medical, Perception, Officer, Case Study



INTRODUCTION

Medical records are one of the important components in the health care system because it serves as the main source of information about the patient's identity, examination results, diagnosis, medical procedures, and services provided to patients. The existence of medical records is not only used for the benefit of health services, but also serves as legal evidence, educational materials, research, and the basis for hospital management decision making. Therefore, the management of medical records must be carried out systematically and continuously so that the information contained in it is maintained in quality, security, and confidentiality. Good management of medical records will support the improvement of the quality of health services as a whole. (Susanti & Rum, 2024)

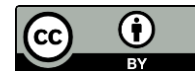
The increase in the number of patient visits in hospitals leads to an increase in the number of medical record documents that must be managed every year. The increase in the volume of these documents has an impact on the increased need for storage space and resources needed for archive management. If proper management is not carried out, there will be a buildup of documents that can hinder the process of Health Services. This condition shows that hospitals need to implement an effective and efficient archive management system. (Sari, Amirudin, & Lestari, 2024)

Document management medical records include a variety of activities ranging from the creation, use, storage, maintenance, to depreciation of documents. One of the activities that has an important role in the management of medical record Archives is retention. Retention is the transfer or depreciation of medical record documents that have passed the active storage period in accordance with applicable regulations. Retention implementation aims to reduce document buildup, increase storage space efficiency, and simplify the file retrieval process. (Kisaputri et al., 2023)

Retention of medical records is becoming an increasingly important requirement in line with the increasing demands on the quality of hospital services. Documents that accumulate in active storage space can cause delays in service because officers take longer to find the files needed. In addition, the accumulation of documents also has the potential to increase the risk of damage and loss of medical record files. Therefore, the implementation of planned and scheduled retention is an important part of effective medical record management. (Susanti & Rum, 2024)

Nevertheless, the implementation of medical record retention in various hospitals still faces various obstacles. Limited human resources, unavailability of archive retention schedules, lack of active document storage facilities, and not optimal implementation of standard operating procedures are factors that are often found. These constraints cause retention activities are not carried out routinely resulting in a buildup of documents in the active filing space. This condition can reduce the effectiveness of medical record management in hospitals. (Susanti & Rum, 2024)

Research conducted by Kisaputri et al. indicates that the implementation of medical record document retention is still not optimal due to limited storage space and the absence of periodic



retention implementation. As a result, active storage shelves are overcrowded, making it difficult to store and retrieve medical record documents. The findings suggest that retention activities have a direct influence on the effectiveness of medical record keeping systems. Therefore, the evaluation of the implementation of retention needs to be carried out on an ongoing basis. (Kisaputri et al., 2023)

Another problem that is often found in the management of medical records is the occurrence of missfile or misplaced medical record file. Research in hospitals shows that missfile still occurs due to storage irregularities, lack of competent personnel, and not optimal filing management. The condition can be aggravated if the document that should have entered the retention period is still mixed with the active document. As a result, the process of searching for documents becomes more difficult and takes longer. (Novi Sad & Amallia, 2023)

The implementation of non-optimal retention can also have an impact on the work efficiency of medical records officers. Officers have to manage an ever-growing number of documents with limited storage space capacity. Under certain conditions, delays in the implementation of retention can increase the workload of officers because they have to sort large amounts of documents at the same time. This situation has the potential to reduce the effectiveness of Health Administration Services in hospitals. (Nafatilova, Arum, & Rahmansyah, 2023)

Human resources is one of the factors that determine the successful implementation of medical record retention. The officer's knowledge, understanding, experience, and perception of the importance of retention will influence how the activity is implemented. Officers who understand the purpose and benefits of retention tend to be better able to carry out procedures according to applicable standards. Conversely, a lack of understanding can lead to the implementation of retention does not run optimally. (Bariyah, Ningtyas, & Setiawan, 2023)

Theoretically, this study is grounded in several complementary perspectives. Perception Theory explains that an individual's perception is formed through the process of receiving, interpreting, and evaluating information based on knowledge, experience, and the surrounding organizational environment. In the context of medical record retention, the perceptions of medical record officers influence how they understand retention policies, respond to operational challenges, and implement retention procedures in daily practice. Therefore, exploring officers' perceptions provides valuable insights into factors that may facilitate or hinder the successful implementation of retention activities.

This study is also supported by the Records Life Cycle Theory, which states that records pass through a series of stages, including creation, active use, maintenance, retention, and final disposition. Medical record retention represents a critical stage in this life cycle because it ensures that records are retained for the required period before being archived or destroyed according to applicable regulations. Furthermore, Health Information Management Theory and Medical Record Management Theory emphasize that effective medical record management depends on regulatory compliance, competent human resources, adequate infrastructure, standardized procedures, and



organizational support. These theoretical perspectives provide the conceptual foundation for analyzing the implementation of medical record retention from the viewpoints of medical record officers and for identifying organizational and operational factors influencing retention practices.

The perception of medical record officers is an important aspect to be studied because officers are the main implementers of retention activities. Perceptions that officers have can describe various real conditions that occur in the implementation of retention, including constraints, needs, and efforts that have been made. Such information cannot always be obtained through mere observation of documents. Therefore, a qualitative approach is needed to explore the experience and views of officers in more depth. (Susanti & Rum, 2024)

Some previous studies have focused more on the picture of retention implementation, retention information systems, or compliance of retention implementation with standard operating procedures. Research that specifically explores the perception of medical records officers regarding the implementation of retention is still relatively limited. In fact, the perception of officers can be the basis in formulating improvement strategies that are more in line with field conditions. These limitations indicate the existence of research gaps that need to be followed up. (Sari et al., 2024; Susanti & Rum, 2024)

Siti Rahmah Padang Islamic hospital is one of the hospitals that continues to increase health care activities. The improvement of these services indirectly affects the increase in the number of medical record documents that must be managed by the medical record unit. These conditions require a retention system that runs well so that the storage space capacity remains adequate. Thus, the evaluation of the implementation of retention becomes an important thing to do.

Based on preliminary studies and various previous research findings, the implementation of medical record retention still faces various challenges both in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and organizational policies. These challenges can affect the effectiveness of medical record management and the quality of hospital services. Therefore, a study is needed that is able to describe the conditions for the implementation of retention in depth from the point of view of medical records officers as the main implementers of these activities.

This study has novelty value because it not only describes the implementation of medical record retention, but also explores the perception of medical records officers towards the process. Through a qualitative approach, this study is expected to be able to identify various factors that influence the implementation of retention and find solutions that are relevant to hospital conditions. The results of the study are expected to be material for evaluation and improvement for the management of medical records at Siti Rahmah Islamic Hospital Padang.

Based on the description, the researchers conducted a study entitled “analysis of the implementation of medical record retention based on the perception of medical record officers at the Islamic Hospital Siti Rahmah Padang”. This study is important because the implementation of retention is an integral part of the management of medical records that affect the effectiveness of storage and quality of hospital services. In addition, the perception of medical records officers as

the main executor of retention activities has not been studied in depth. The results are expected to provide operational recommendations that are useful for improving the quality of medical record management in hospitals.

METHODS

This study uses qualitative methods with case study design to obtain a deep understanding of the implementation of medical record retention based on the perception of medical record officers at Siti Rahmah Padang Islamic Hospital. The research was carried out at the Siti Rahmah Padang Islamic Hospital Medical Record installation in 2026. Research informants were selected using purposive sampling technique by considering direct involvement in medical record retention activities. Informants numbered 5 people with informant inclusion criteria include medical records officers who have worked for at least one year, are directly involved in the management of medical record documents, are willing to become informants, and are able to provide the information needed according to the purpose of the study. The exclusion criteria are officers who are on leave, are not in place when the study takes place, or are not willing to follow the interview process to completion.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, direct observation of the implementation of medical record retention, and review of documents related to policies, standard operating procedures, and retention activity reports. Research instruments include semi-structured interview guidelines, observation sheets, voice recording devices, field notes, and document review sheets. The validity of the data is maintained through source triangulation and triangulation techniques to compare data obtained from different informants and data collection methods. Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman models, which included the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification. This study has applied the principles of research ethics that include respect for the autonomy of respondents, confidentiality of data, anonymity, as well as the principles of beneficence and non-maleficence. Before the data collection process is carried out, each informant is given an explanation of the objectives, benefits, research procedures, as well as the right to resign at any time without any consequences. Furthermore, informants who are willing to participate are asked to sign a consent sheet after explanation (informed consent) as a form of voluntary consent to engage in research.

RESULTS

1. Characteristics of Informants

This study involved five informants who were selected using purposive sampling technique based on direct involvement in the implementation of medical record retention. Informants consist of one head of medical record installation, one filing coordinator, and three medical record officers. All informants have worked for more than one year and have experience in document management of medical records and the implementation of retention.



2. Results of Data Analysis Based on Miles and Huberman Models

Data analysis is done interactively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. In the data reduction phase, the researcher conducted the selection process, concentration, simplification, and grouping of data from interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results of data reduction indicate the existence of three main themes related to the implementation of medical record retention, namely the understanding of medical record retention officers, constraints in the implementation of retention, and efforts to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of medical record retention.

At the data presentation stage, the results of interviews and observations are grouped into themes and subthemes, making it easier for researchers to identify patterns and relationships between findings. Furthermore, at the conclusion stage, the interpretation of all data that has been reduced and presented is carried out so that a comprehensive picture is obtained regarding the implementation of medical record retention based on the perception of medical record officers at Siti Rahmah Padang Islamic Hospital.

a. Theme 1. Officer's Understanding of Medical Record Retention

The results of the data reduction showed that all informants understood the retention of medical records as a document depreciation process that was carried out based on a predetermined shelf life. This understanding is obtained through work experience, internal socialization, and the implementation of daily tasks in the medical records unit. Based on the interview results, the officers realized that retention has benefits in reducing document accumulation and increasing the efficiency of medical record file storage.

Informant 2 stated:

"Retention is done to sort out files that are no longer active so that storage space remains available and file search becomes easier."

This statement is supported by observations that show that officers are able to identify documents that have entered the retention period in accordance with applicable regulations. However, the results of the interviews also showed that the understanding of the retention schedule and shelf life of certain types of documents still differed between officers.

Informant 5:

"In general we know when files should be retained, but for certain types of documents it is still necessary to look again at the existing guidelines."

These findings indicate that officers' understanding of the concept of retention is quite good, but it is still necessary to equalize perceptions through training and socialization periodically.

b. Theme 2. Constraints in the Implementation of Medical Record Retention

The results of data reduction indicate that the main constraints in the implementation of medical record retention include limited storage space, limited human resources, and not optimal implementation of retention on a scheduled basis. All informants stated that the volume of medical

record documents continues to increase every year so that the capacity of filing space becomes increasingly limited.

Informant 4 revealed:

"Storage shelves are almost full because the number of files continues to grow. Sometimes retention has to wait for the right time because other jobs are also quite a lot."

The observation showed that the density of the file on some active storage racks. In addition, it was found that some documents that have entered the retention period are still stored with active documents due to limited storage space for inactive documents.

Another obstacle found is the limited number of officers. Based on interviews, medical records officers are not only responsible for filing and retention activities, but also carry out various other administrative tasks.

Informant 3 stated:

"The number of existing officers must handle several jobs at once so that the implementation of retention cannot be done routinely."

The results of the document review showed that the hospital already has a medical record retention SOP, but its implementation has not run optimally due to limited resources available.

c. Theme 3. Efforts to Improve the Effectiveness of Medical Record Retention

The data reduction results showed that all informants had a positive perception of the importance of medical record retention and conveyed several efforts that could be made to improve the effectiveness of its implementation. The first subtheme is the improvement of Officer competence through training and socialization. Informants stated that regular training can improve officers' understanding of retention procedures in accordance with regulations.

Informant 1:

"Training is needed so that all officers have the same understanding of the stages of retention and management of inactive documents."

The second sub-theme is the provision of adequate facilities and infrastructure. The observation shows that the storage space of inactive documents is still limited so that additional storage facilities are needed to support retention activities.

The third sub-theme is the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation. Informants expect regular supervision and evaluation of the hospital management so that the implementation of retention can run according to a predetermined schedule.

Informant 2 stated:

"If there are periodic evaluations, the implementation of retention will be more controlled and obstacles that arise can be immediately followed up."

3. Conclusion

Based on the results of data reduction and presentation of data that has been done, it can be concluded that the implementation of medical record retention at Siti Rahmah Padang Islamic



Hospital has been carried out in accordance with the basic understanding of the officer about the importance of retention. However, the implementation is not optimal because there are still constraints in the form of limited storage space, limited human resources, and inconsistent implementation of retention on schedule. Officers have a positive perception of medical record retention and view that increasing competence, providing adequate facilities, and continuous monitoring and evaluation are necessary steps to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of medical record retention in hospitals.

DISCUSSION

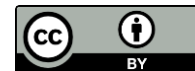
The implementation of medical record retention in Siti Rahmah Padang Islamic Hospital shows that the officers have a fairly good understanding of the basic concepts of retention. The officer understands that retention is a process of depreciation of medical record documents based on a certain storage period. This understanding is an important basis in the implementation of medical record management activities in the filing unit. This shows that conceptually the officer already has the basic knowledge that supports the implementation of retention.

The results also show that the understanding of officers is not yet fully uniform, especially regarding retention schedules for certain types of documents. Some officers still have to refer back to guidelines or sops when encountering certain types of documents. This condition indicates a variation in the level of understanding between officers in the implementation of retention. This lack of understanding can affect the consistency of retention implementation in the field.

Theoretically, the understanding of the officer is one of the important factors in the successful implementation of medical record management. Good knowledge will affect the ability of officers to carry out procedures according to established standards. In the context of retention, a less even understanding can lead to irregularities in the document depreciation process. This is in line with the concept of Health Information Management which emphasizes the importance of the competence of medical records personnel in archive management. (Hatta, 2021)

Previous research has also shown that the level of knowledge of officers has an effect on the effectiveness of medical record management, including retention activities. Officers who have a better understanding tend to be more disciplined in carrying out retention procedures according to SOP. Conversely, a lack of understanding can lead to delays or inaccuracies in the process of depreciation of documents. This finding reinforces the results of the study that the understanding of officers becomes an important factor in the implementation of retention. (Kurniawati & Sari, 2022)

The variation in officers' understanding indicates that knowledge transfer regarding retention procedures has not been implemented consistently. This may be associated with the absence of regular training and limited dissemination of updated standard operating procedures. As a result, officers may interpret retention criteria differently, potentially leading to inconsistent implementation across departments.



Unlike previous studies that mainly attributed inadequate retention to technical limitations, this study highlights that cognitive and organizational factors also contribute substantially to retention effectiveness. This finding reinforces Perception Theory, which explains that individual perceptions are shaped by knowledge and experience, ultimately influencing work behaviour and decision-making during retention activities.

Limited storage capacity reflects an imbalance between the increasing volume of medical records and the hospital's archival infrastructure. This problem has become more prominent because retention activities are not conducted regularly, causing inactive records to remain in active filing areas. Consequently, overcrowded storage shelves reduce filing efficiency, increase the likelihood of misfiling, and prolong document retrieval time, which may ultimately affect service quality.

This finding differs from several previous studies that considered storage limitations merely as a physical infrastructure issue. The present study demonstrates that inadequate storage is closely associated with organizational factors, particularly delayed retention implementation. Therefore, expanding storage space alone is unlikely to provide a sustainable solution without improving retention management practices.

According to Records Life Cycle Theory, retention represents an essential transition between active and inactive record management. Delays at this stage interrupt the normal records lifecycle, resulting in inefficient archive management. Thus, the present findings provide empirical support for the application of Records Life Cycle Theory within hospital medical record management.

Limited human resources emerged as one of the main barriers to the implementation of medical record retention. This condition occurs because medical record officers are responsible for multiple administrative and operational tasks in addition to retention activities, making it difficult to allocate sufficient time for scheduled retention. As a consequence, retention activities are frequently postponed, resulting in the accumulation of inactive medical records, reduced storage capacity, and longer document retrieval times. These findings indicate that human resource constraints affect not only operational efficiency but also the overall quality of medical record management.

This finding is partially consistent with the study by Kurniawati and Sari (2022), which reported that inadequate staffing reduced the effectiveness of medical record management. However, unlike previous studies that primarily emphasized the shortage of personnel, this study demonstrates that workload distribution and competing job responsibilities are equally important factors influencing retention implementation. This suggests that increasing staff numbers alone may not fully resolve the problem unless accompanied by better work allocation and retention scheduling.

From the perspective of Health Information Management Theory, competent and adequately allocated human resources constitute a fundamental component of effective medical



record management. Likewise, Medical Record Management Theory emphasizes that successful retention depends on the integration of personnel, procedures, and supporting facilities. Therefore, the findings extend these theoretical perspectives by demonstrating that organizational workload management plays a critical role in ensuring compliance with retention policies in hospital settings.

Practically, these findings imply that hospital management should periodically evaluate staffing needs, redistribute workloads, and establish dedicated retention schedules. Such measures are expected to improve retention compliance, optimize storage utilization, and enhance the efficiency of health information services.

Theoretically, the limitation of facilities and infrastructure is a factor that often affects the effectiveness of medical records management. Insufficient storage space can hinder the overall archive management process. In addition, limited manpower can also reduce the effectiveness of the implementation of retention activities. This is in accordance with the concept of Resource Management in health care organizations. (Widjaja, 2020)

Previous research has also found that limited filing space is a common problem in the management of medical records in hospitals. This condition often leads to the accumulation of documents and hinders the implementation of periodic retention. In addition, the high workload of officers is also a major inhibiting factor. This finding is in line with the results of a study that showed similar constraints in the Islamic Hospital Siti Rahmah Padang. (Sutrisno & Lestari, 2023)

Researchers assume that the constraints are caused not only by technical factors, but also by the not yet optimal management planning retention in hospitals. The lack of long-term planning of space and manpower requirements also exacerbates the condition. Therefore, more systematic planning is needed in the management of medical records. This is important to avoid accumulating documents in the future.

The results showed that officers have efforts to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of retention through increased understanding and training. Officers recognize the importance of periodic training to equalize perceptions in the implementation of retention. In addition, the training is considered to be able to improve technical skills in the management of inactive documents. This shows the positive awareness of the officers on the importance of increasing competence.

In addition to training, the need for more adequate facilities and infrastructure is also an effort expected by officers. The addition of inactive document storage space is considered very important to reduce file buildup. Officers also expect a more structured archive management system. Thus, the implementation of retention can be carried out in a more scheduled manner.

Theoretically, the improvement of competence and infrastructure is a major supporting factor in the success of medical records management. Organizations that have adequate resources tend to be better able to carry out effective archive management. This is included in the principles of quality management of Health Services. (WHO, 2020)

Previous research has also shown that management training and support have a significant influence on the success of medical record management. Hospitals that routinely provide training to officers tend to have better retention systems. In addition, facility support is also an important factor in the successful implementation of retention policies. (Rahmawati & Pratama, 2022)

Researchers assume that the efforts made by the officers have not been able to run optimally without the support of hospital management. Although officers have good awareness, limited facilities and operational policies are still a major obstacle. Therefore, collaboration between officers and management is needed to improve retention effectiveness. This will support the achievement of better medical record management.

Overall, the results show that the implementation of medical record retention still faces various challenges but has the potential to be improved. Officers have a fairly good basic understanding as well as a positive attitude towards the importance of retention. However, technical and operational constraints are still the main obstacles in its implementation. Therefore, a complete overhaul of the system is required.

When associated with medical record management theory, retention success is strongly influenced by three main components, namely people, means, and procedures. These three components must run in a balanced manner so that the medical record management system can run optimally. Imbalance of one of the components can lead to ineffectiveness of the system. This is in accordance with the concept of an integrated health information system. (Huffman, 2020)

Previous studies have also confirmed that regular evaluation of retention systems is needed to improve the effectiveness of medical record management. Evaluation can help identify obstacles and provide appropriate solutions. In addition, the evaluation also helps improve the overall quality of hospital services. (Sari & Wulandari, 2021)

Researchers assume that the implementation of retention in the Islamic Hospital Siti Rahmah Padang is still in the developing stage. With stronger management support, retention implementation can be improved to be more effective. In addition, increased coordination between officers is also an important factor in the successful implementation of retention. This will have an impact on improving the quality of medical record services.

In general, this study shows that the perception of officers has an important role in describing the real conditions of the implementation of retention. The perception reflects the direct experience of officers in facing various obstacles and challenges. Therefore, a qualitative approach is very appropriate to use in this study.

CONCLUSIONS

The results showed that the implementation of medical record retention at Siti Rahmah Islamic Hospital Padang generally follows the applicable procedures and operational standards; however, its implementation has not been fully optimized or conducted according to a regular



schedule. The study identified three main themes: variations in medical records officers' understanding of the concepts and implementation of medical record retention, limited facilities and storage space for inactive records, and inadequate management monitoring and evaluation. Nevertheless, medical records officers demonstrated a positive perception of the importance of retention activities in supporting effective medical record management and improving the quality of hospital services.

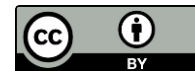
Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of medical record retention requires further strengthening in terms of human resources, particularly through improving the knowledge and competencies of medical records officers, as well as enhancing supporting facilities and infrastructure, including adequate storage space for inactive records. In addition, more structured supervision and periodic evaluation are needed to ensure that retention activities are implemented consistently in accordance with applicable regulations. The limitations of this study include the small number of informants and the fact that the research was conducted in only one hospital, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other healthcare settings. Furthermore, the qualitative data relied heavily on the perceptions of medical records officers, which may introduce subjectivity into the findings. Future studies are recommended to involve multiple hospitals and a larger number of participants to provide broader evidence and strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

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