

EFFECTIVENESS OF NURSE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING PATIENT COOPERATION DURING TREATMENT

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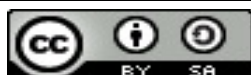
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ABSTRACT

Weaknesses in applying therapeutic communication are still a problem for nurses. This affects the quality of nursing services that have an impact on patient satisfaction. The purpose of this study was to identify to evaluate the effectiveness of nurse therapeutic communication in enhancing patient cooperation during treatment. This research method was an analytical survey method that used a cross-sectional approach. A cross-sectional study was conducted among 127 inpatients at Slamet Riyadi Hospital, Surakarta, in March 2024. Data were collected using three instruments: demographic questionnaire, therapeutic communication questionnaire (13 items; Cronbach's Alpha = 0.824), and patient cooperation questionnaire (20 items; Cronbach's Alpha > 0.80). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and linear regression. The results from this research most respondents reported consistent therapeutic communication (54.3%) and high cooperation (52.8%). A significant positive correlation was found between therapeutic communication and patient cooperation ($p < 0.001$; $r = 0.552$) showing that communication explained 41.5% of cooperation variance. Nurse therapeutic communication significantly improves patient cooperation. Enhancing nurses' communication skills—empathy, respect, and active listening—supports patient-centered care and better health outcomes.

KEYWORDS

therapeutic communication, patient cooperation, nursing



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INTRODUCTION

Nursing practice is inseparable from the ability to establish effective communication with patients. One of the most essential competencies in professional nursing is therapeutic communication, which aims to build trust, provide psychological support, and encourage patient involvement in the treatment process (Potter & Perry, 2021). Unlike ordinary communication, therapeutic communication emphasizes empathy, active listening, and the use of both verbal and non-verbal expressions to help patients adapt to their health conditions. Patient cooperation during treatment is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of nurse communication. Cooperative behavior is reflected in patients' willingness to follow instructions, express complaints honestly, and actively participate in the recovery process (Muliadi, Nurjanah, & Handayani, 2022). However, inadequate communication can lead to resistance, anxiety, misunderstanding of medical instructions, and even refusal of treatment (Wardani & Setyawan, 2023).

Several recent studies have highlighted the positive relationship between nurse-patient therapeutic communication and patient outcomes. Research by Sari, Wulandari, and Prasetyo (2022) found that therapeutic communication significantly improved inpatient adherence by up to 30%. Similarly, a systematic review by Wardani and Setyawan (2023) emphasized that effective communication contributes to patient-centered care and increases overall patient satisfaction. Moreover, the World Health Organization (2021) recommends patient engagement through therapeutic communication as a core strategy for achieving holistic, safe, and quality healthcare.

The World Health Organization (2021) has also underlined the importance of effective communication as a key component of patient engagement strategies, highlighting its potential to reduce errors, strengthen safety culture, and improve clinical results. More recent findings show that structured communication approaches, when implemented consistently, lead to greater patient trust and collaboration with health professionals (Forchuk, 2021; Smith & Liehr, 2022). Despite its importance, communication failure remains one of the leading causes of patient safety incidents worldwide. A systematic review and meta-analysis of 46 studies involving 67,826 patients reported that approximately 24% of all patient safety incidents were attributed to poor communication, with 13.2% of these cases caused solely by communication breakdowns (Weiss et al., 2023). This highlights that effective communication is not merely a soft skill but a determinant factor in preventing adverse events.

In Indonesia, patient safety incidents are still prevalent. For example, a study in primary healthcare centers in Surabaya documented 65 patient safety incidents between January and July 2022. Administrative errors accounted for 24.61%, medication errors 13.84%, and patient falls 18.46%—most of which could have been prevented through better communication among healthcare providers and with patients (Sulistyorini et al., 2022). These findings reinforce the urgency of therapeutic communication as a strategy to enhance both patient safety and cooperative behavior during treatment. Communication failures also account for a significant proportion of malpractice claims. A study in anesthesia practice revealed that 43% of malpractice claims involved communication failures between healthcare professionals and patients, which directly contributed to patient harm (Greenberg et al., 2021).

In terms of patient cooperation, non-adherence to treatment remains a critical issue. A study in Surabaya, Indonesia, reported that 80% of patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus were non-adherent to long-term medication regimens (Astuti et al., 2020). This high non-adherence rate reflects the lack of patient cooperation in the treatment process, which is often associated with ineffective nurse-patient communication. Given these findings, it is

important to investigate the effectiveness of nurse therapeutic communication in enhancing patient cooperation during treatment. This study is expected to strengthen evidence-based nursing practices and contribute to the improvement of healthcare service quality, and is essential to provide empirical evidence on the role of nurse-patient communication in improving cooperative behavior during care delivery.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method is a quantitative research that uses a cross-sectional design where variables including risk factors and variables including effect factors are observed and related variables are measured, and at the same time or at one time (Chandra, 2008). Respondents in this study were inpatients for at least 3 days at Slamet Riyadi Hospital, Surakarta. This research was conducted in March 2024 a many as 127 respondents. The instruments were utilized in collecting data: (1) demographic questionnaire (age, sex, education, occupation, length of stay), (2) therapeutic communication questionnaire (13 items, Likert scale, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.824), and (3) patient cooperation questionnaire (15–20 items, Likert scale, Cronbach's Alpha > 0.80). The validity and reliability test of this instrument in this study was conducted using descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation/linear regression to determine the effect of therapeutic communication on patient cooperation. The validity test already conducted by researchers on the valid research instrument shows that r count below the r table (0.304). Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha, the results of this obtained the two valid instruments are indicated by the value of Cronbach's Alpha 0.824 for the therapeutic communication instrument, thereby demonstrating high internal consistency and measurement reliability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1. Respondent Frequency Distribution Based on Gender, Age, Work, and Education Patients in the ward in March 2024 (n = 127)

Variable	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	78	61,4
Male	49	38,6
Age		
17-24	15	11,8
25-34	19	15
35-49	39	30,7
50-64	43	33,8
65>	11	8,7
Work		
Students	16	12,6
Government employees	9	7,1
Private employees	31	24,4
Laborer	17	13,4
Traders	28	22
unemployment	26	20,5
Education		
Elementari School	35	27,6
Junior High school	37	29,1
Senior High school	47	37,0
Diploma	3	2,4
Bachelor	5	3,9

2. Therapeutic Communication

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Therapeutic Communication in the ward March 2024 (n = 127)

Therapeutic Communication	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Never	2	1,6
Often	56	44,1
Always	69	54,3
Total	127	100

3. Patient Cooperative

Table 3. Respondent Frequency Distribution Based on Patient Cooperative in the ward on March 2024 (n = 127)

Patient Cooperative	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Not Cooperative	3	2,4
Cooperative	57	44,9
Very Cooperative	67	52,8
Total	127	100

4. Bivariate Analysis

Table 3. Cross Table of Relationships between Therapeutic Communication and Patient Cooperative in the ward on March 2024 (n = 127)

Therapeutic Communication	Patient Cooperative						Total	
	Not cooperative		Cooperative		Very Cooperative			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
Never	2	1,6	0	0	0	0	2	1,6
Often	0	0	50	39,4	6	4,7	56	44,1
Always	1	0,8	7	5,5	61	48	69	54,3
Total	3	2,4	57	44,9	67	52,8	127	100

This study found that nurse therapeutic communication significantly influenced patient cooperation during treatment. Most patients reported being satisfied with the quality of nursing care, and statistical analysis confirmed a strong positive relationship between therapeutic communication and patient cooperation. These findings reinforce the notion that communication is not only a basic interpersonal skill but also a therapeutic tool that shapes patient experiences and outcomes. The results are consistent with previous evidence that highlights communication as a key determinant of patient satisfaction and compliance. Martínez-Linares et al. (2020) emphasized that therapeutic communication fosters trust and strengthens the therapeutic alliance, which in turn enhances treatment adherence. Similarly, Goh et al. (2021) demonstrated that effective nurse–patient communication reduces patient anxiety, improves recovery, and facilitates positive health outcomes.

In this study, the orientation phase of therapeutic communication emerged as particularly important. The initial nurse–patient encounter created a foundation for cooperation, as patients often formed their perceptions of care quality during first interactions. This supports the findings of Putra et al. (2022), who reported that patients' satisfaction with hospital services was strongly associated with the quality of communication in the early stages of care. The regression analysis in this study revealed that therapeutic communication explained 41.5% of the variance in patient cooperation. This aligns with the work of Al-Kalalkeh and Salameh (2023), who found that communication skills among nurses were significant predictors of patient cooperation and compliance. These results suggest that improving nurse communication competencies could substantially enhance the overall patient experience and clinical outcomes.

Beyond patient outcomes, effective therapeutic communication also benefits healthcare providers by enabling accurate data collection, improving clinical decision-

making, and reducing misunderstandings that may lead to medical errors (Salehi et al., 2024). In this sense, communication should not be viewed as a “soft skill,” but rather as a core component of patient safety and quality of care. Taken together, these findings highlight the critical role of nurse therapeutic communication in modern healthcare. Strengthening communication skills through continuous training and reflective practice can improve cooperation, satisfaction, and treatment adherence among patients. Ultimately, this will contribute to achieving safer, more patient-centered, and higher-quality healthcare services.

In terms of patient cooperative, the data (Table 3) showed that out of 127 respondents, the majority (52.8%, n=67) reported being highly cooperative with the nursing care they received. Conversely, only 2.4% (n=3) of respondents reported being non-cooperative. This suggests that the overall quality of hospital services, particularly nursing care, was perceived positively by most patients. Patient cooperative is closely tied to the quality of care provided. It is widely recognized as a key indicator of healthcare quality and an essential measure for evaluating and improving hospital performance (Koy et al., 2016; Laschinger et al., 2005). Nurses, as frontline healthcare providers, play a central role in determining this cooperative through their direct interaction with patients (De-La-Cueva-Ariza et al., 2014). More recent evidence also supports that effective nurse-patient communication significantly enhances patient trust, compliance, and satisfaction with care (Goh et al., 2021; Martínez-Linares et al., 2020).

Therapeutic communication by nurses encompasses four core dimensions: authenticity, empathy, respect, and concreteness (Nurjannah, 2024). These are not limited to verbal exchanges but also include non-verbal behaviors that convey attentiveness and compassion. Each stage of therapeutic communication—pre-interaction, orientation, working, and termination—is critical. In this study, the orientation phase, where nurses first engage with patients, was particularly emphasized. At this stage, the nurse’s attitude, attentiveness, and initial approach strongly influenced patients’ satisfaction with care. Ultimately, therapeutic communication benefits not only patients but also healthcare professionals. For patients, it provides a channel to express concerns, which often results in relief and reassurance. For medical staff, it ensures accurate information gathering, which is essential for diagnosis and treatment planning. Thus, effective communication fosters mutual understanding, strengthens therapeutic relationships, and improves healthcare outcomes.

Data Cross-tabulation analysis (Table 4) revealed a clear association between therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction. Two patients (1.6%) who answered that they never experienced therapeutic communication also reported non-cooperative with care. On the other hand, 56 patients (44.1%) who often experienced therapeutic communication were cooperative, while 69 patients (54.3%) who answered that nurses always practiced therapeutic communication were very highly cooperative. Statistical testing using the Spearman rank test corroborated this correlation, p-value 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.552$) was moderate and positive, indicating that therapeutic communication change was consistently associated with higher levels of patient satisfaction. Practically, the more the quality and stability of nurse-patient communication, the more satisfied the patients were with their overall care experience. Conversely, limited or poor communication was reflected in lower satisfaction.

The research is consistent with current literature stressing the role of therapeutic communication in better patient outcomes. Goh et al. (2021) demonstrated that ongoing therapeutic dialogue establishes patient trust and adherence, while Al-Kalaldeh and Salameh (2023) identified communication competency as one of the major determinants of patient satisfaction in hospitals. Similarly, Salehi et al. (2024) indicated that methodical

communication reduces anxiety and prevents miscommunication, thereby resulting in enhanced recovery processes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research that has been carried out at the Slamet Riyadi Hospital in 2024, it can be concluded: this study confirms that therapeutic communication by nurses significantly enhances patient cooperation during treatment. More than half of patients (52.8%) reported high cooperation, while only 2.4% were non-cooperative. A positive moderate correlation ($r = 0.552$, $p < 0.05$) was found, showing that better communication leads to higher patient satisfaction and adherence. Strengthening nurse communication skills is essential to improve patient trust, help healthcare providers by increasing precision in data, reducing medical errors, improving patient safety, and overall quality of healthcare services

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