



## **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NURSE ATTITUDES AND FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE CARE OF ELDERLY PATIENTS WITH CHRONIC ILLNESSES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Elderly care for patients with chronic illnesses has become a critical issue in Indonesia, given the high prevalence of chronic conditions among the elderly, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. Positive nurse attitudes and family support play essential roles in enhancing the quality of care and well-being of elderly patients. This study analyzes the relationship between nurse attitudes and family support in the quality of care provided to elderly patients with chronic illnesses. The research employed a quantitative approach with an observational cross-sectional design, involving 50 elderly participants selected through purposive sampling. The results indicate that patients receiving care from nurses with positive attitudes and strong family support tend to experience a higher quality of care ( $p < 0.05$ ). Empathetic nurse attitudes and consistent family support improve patient comfort, adherence to treatment, and clinical outcomes. These findings highlight the importance of synergy between positive nurse attitudes and family support in optimizing elderly care and reducing the potential for loneliness and mental health decline among patients.

**Keywords:** elderly; family support; nurse attitudes; patient care

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Elderly care for patients with chronic illnesses has become an increasingly important health issue worldwide, including in Indonesia (Amalia et al., 2022). As the elderly population grows, the number of individuals with chronic illnesses is also rising (Nisak et al., 2018). According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease are the primary causes of morbidity and mortality among the elderly (Balakumar et al., 2016). In this context, the role of nurses as professional caregivers, along with family support as the main companion for the elderly at home, is crucial to ensuring the quality of life and well-being of elderly patients (Pashar, 2022). Nurse attitudes in caring for elderly patients with chronic illnesses have a significant impact on the quality of care provided (Pashar, 2022). Positive attitudes from nurses—such as empathy, patience, and the ability to understand patients' emotional and physical needs—can enhance patient comfort and trust. A supportive nurse attitude is closely associated with higher patient satisfaction and better care outcomes. Conversely, a lack of attentiveness or empathy can reduce care quality and negatively affect patient conditions (Meilina & Bernarto, 2021).

In addition to nurse attitudes, family support also plays an essential role in the care process for elderly patients. Families that provide emotional and physical support, such as assisting with

daily activities or creating a comfortable environment, can enhance the well-being of elderly patients (Amelia & Kurniawati, 2020). According to a study by Erda et al. (2020), family support significantly helps reduce stress levels in elderly patients, which in turn can improve their clinical outcomes. Challenges in caring for elderly patients with chronic illnesses are also related to limited facilities, nurse skills, and family relationship dynamics (Djoar & Anggarani, 2022). Some families may lack the time or resources to optimally support elderly patients, while some nurses may feel overwhelmed by high workloads. These factors can reduce the effectiveness of care and potentially impact the patients' quality of life (Sinaga, 2016).

In Indonesia, the limitations of the healthcare system and low public awareness of the importance of family support for elderly patients add complexity to this issue. A lack of family support often leaves patients feeling isolated and increases the risk of mental health decline. In this context, in-depth research is needed to understand how nurse attitudes and family support can reinforce each other in providing quality care for elderly patients with chronic illnesses (Agustina et al., 2023; Noer & Ners, 2022).

Previous research has emphasized the importance of professional nurse attitudes and family support in contributing to successful elderly care. However, few studies have specifically examined the relationship between these two factors and their impact on the quality of care for elderly patients with chronic illnesses. This presents an opportunity for more in-depth research to identify key factors that can support a more holistic approach to elderly care. This study aims to analyze the relationship between nurse attitudes and family support in the quality of care provided to elderly patients with chronic illnesses.

## METHOD

This study is a quantitative study with a correlational approach. The research design used is observational with a cross-sectional method. The study population was 50 elderly people who visited the Batoh Health Center for treatment. Sampling used a purposive sampling technique, so that all 50 elderly people who met the criteria could be included in the study. The inclusion criteria were elderly people who were willing to be respondents, domiciled in the Batoh Health Center work area, and had chronic diseases. While the exclusion criteria were elderly people who were not willing to be respondents, had mental or psychological disorders, or experienced severe cognitive impairment. This study was conducted in March-April 2024.

## RESULT

Table 1 shows that out of 50 respondents, the majority were female (60%), and most had completed Junior High School (44%). A smaller percentage had Primary School (20%), Senior High School (30%), or Bachelor's degree (6%) education. These results highlight a diverse demographic, with a predominance of females and Junior High School education among the respondents.

Table 1.  
Respondent characteristics (n=50)

Variables	f	%
Gender		
Man	20	40
Woman	30	60
Level of education		
Primary School (PS)	10	20
Junior High School (JHS)	12	44
Senior High School (SHS)	5	30
Bachelor's degree	3	6

Table 2.  
The relationship between nurses' attitudes and family support for caring for elderly patients

Variables	Patient Care				P Value*
	Good		Not Enough		
	f	%	f	%	
Nurse Attitude					
Positive	29	58	7	14	0.000
Negative	4	8	10	20	
Family Support					
High	26	52	4	8	0.001
Low	6	12	14	28	

\* Chi-Square Test

Table 2 shows that there is a significant relationship between nurse attitudes and family support toward the quality of care for elderly patients. Based on nurse attitudes, the majority (58%) of patients who received good care were attended by nurses with a positive attitude, while the majority (20%) of patients who received poor care were attended by nurses with a negative attitude. Statistical testing revealed a p-value of 0.000, indicating a significant relationship between nurse attitudes and the quality of patient care. Based on family support, the majority of patients who received good care were those with high family support (52%), while most patients who received poor care had low family support (28%). Statistical testing yielded a p-value of 0.001, indicating a significant relationship between family support and the quality of care for elderly patients. These results suggest that positive nurse attitudes and high family support contribute to better care for elderly patients (Table 2).

## DISCUSSION

This study shows that nurse attitudes have a significant relationship with the quality of care for elderly patients. These results are consistent with research that found nurses with a positive attitude tend to provide more empathetic, responsive, and supportive care to the elderly, ultimately improving the quality of care (Ayuningtyas & Wibowo, 2024). This positive attitude reflects a high level of concern, a willingness to help, and effective communication skills, all of which are crucial in caring for elderly individuals with special needs (Lickona, 2022). On the other hand, negative nurse attitudes, such as a lack of empathy or impatience, often have a detrimental effect on the quality of care received by elderly patients. Nurses' unsupportive behaviors can cause stress in patients and even worsen their health conditions (Y. A. Wijaya et al., 2022). These results are consistent with other studies that found that negative attitudes contribute to feelings of discomfort and a lack of trust in patients, resulting in suboptimal care (Ulya & Ratnawati, 2024).

In addition to nurse attitudes, family support has also been shown to be significant in determining the quality of care for elderly patients. These results are consistent with research that found high family support improves patients' quality of life and satisfaction with the healthcare services they receive (No, 2022). Supportive families help create a conducive environment, provide emotional encouragement, and assist patients in adhering to their treatment schedules (Rahmi, 2019). The quality of patient care tends to decline in patients who do not receive adequate family support. Families that provide little attention or emotional presence may cause patients to feel lonely and neglected. This can worsen the patient's psychological condition and reduce the effectiveness of care provided by nurses. Such a situation has the potential to increase the risk of depression and anxiety in elderly patients (Ambali & Mangapi, 2022; Sya'diyah et al., 2023).

Positive nurse attitudes enable the implementation of a holistic care approach that focuses on the physical, emotional, and psychological needs of elderly patients. According to research, holistic care based on empathy, open communication, and full attention to patients has been proven to effectively improve the well-being of the elderly. In this context, positive nurse attitudes serve as the foundation for higher-quality services that respect the dignity of patients (Santoso et al., 2024; Zuhroidah et al., 2024). The results of this study indicate the importance of synergy between positive nurse attitudes and strong family support. This combination enhances patient comfort and adherence to care protocols, leading to better outcomes in elderly health management. The presence of support from both parties makes patients feel more cared for and valued in their environment (Santoso et al., 2024; Zuhroidah et al., 2024). High family support also affects elderly patients' adherence to treatment and care. Families can provide encouragement and help monitor medication intake or other care procedures, which positively impacts the effectiveness of treatment (A. K. Wijaya & Padila, 2019). Research by Utami dan Raudatussalamah (2019) shows that patients with strong family support are more likely to adhere to medical instructions and experience more significant improvements in their health condition. Social support, particularly from family, is an important factor in improving the quality of life for elderly patients. A study by Mirza (2017) mentions that a good relationship with family and a friendly attitude from nurses can reduce feelings of loneliness, which are often experienced by patients in healthcare settings. Patients who feel cared for and supported tend to be more optimistic and show positive responses to care.

## **CONCLUSION**

Positive nurse attitudes and strong family support play a crucial role in improving the quality of care for elderly patients. The research findings show a significant relationship between nurse attitudes and family support with the quality of elderly patient care ( $P < 0.05$ ). These findings emphasize the importance of nurse attitudes and family support in optimizing elderly healthcare.

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