

## **ANXIETY OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN UNDERGOING HOSPITALIZATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Hospitalization often creates traumatic and stressful events for children and families. The stressors that children can experience related to hospitalization can produce various reactions. In addition to the physiological effects of health problems, the effects of hospitalization on children include anxiety and fear, separation anxiety and loss of control. Anxiety that occurs in children cannot be ignored, if it is not treated immediately it will cause the child to reject treatment and medication. The aim of this study was to examine the anxiety of preschool aged children (3-6 years) undergoing hospitalization in the children's room at Santa Elisabeth Hospital, Medan. Descriptive research design with accidental sampling technique, the number of respondents was 73 people, the questionnaire used was SCASS anxiety for preschool children. The research results showed that the highest level of anxiety was in the severe category, 49 people (67,1%) and the lowest was in the moderate category, 24 people (32,9%). So it can be concluded that the anxiety level of preschool children undergoing hospitalization is in the severe category because the children feel afraid of the hospital atmosphere, afraid of the treatment provided, children always cry when their parents are not nearby, cry and are afraid when they see doctors and nurses, cry seeing the syringe by the nurse. It is hoped that nurses will continue to accompany children during hospitalization to reduce anxiety in children.

Keywords: anxiety; hospitalization; preschool

### **INTRODUCTION**

The world health problem that is currently a priority for the WHO (World Health Organization) is completing the unfinished MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) health agenda. The agenda contained in the MDGs was redeveloped into the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) health agenda until 2030. The health agenda contained in the SDGs includes maternal health, child health, infectious diseases and environmental health (WHO, 2015). Health during childhood really determines the quality of children in the future, therefore children's health really needs to be maintained. Caring for a child in hospital is an experience full of stress, both for the child and the parents. Some scientific evidence shows that the hospital environment itself is a cause of stress for children and their parents, both the physical environment of the hospital such as buildings or treatment rooms, equipment, distinctive smells, the white clothes of health workers and the social environment, such as fellow child patients. , or even the interactions and attitudes of health workers themselves (Supartini, 2014)

Sick children who have to be hospitalized can cause problems for both the child and their parents, not only in terms of the child's physical health but also in terms of the child's psychological well-being because both the child and the parents have to adjust to the new environment. Hospitalization can trigger reactions in children that have an impact on the child's treatment in hospital, such as mild to severe anxiety which can interfere with the child's healing process while in hospital (Wahyuni, 2016). Hospitalization often creates a traumatic and stressful event in a climate of uncertainty for the child and family, whether it is an effective procedure that has been planned in advance or an emergency situation that occurs due to trauma. The stressors that children can experience related to hospitalization can produce various reactions. In addition to the physiological

effects of health problems, the effects of hospitalization on children include anxiety and fear, separation anxiety and loss of control (Kyle & Carman, 2015).

Anxiety that occurs in children cannot be ignored, if it is not treated immediately it will cause the child to reject the care and treatment provided so that it will affect the length of the child's treatment days and can aggravate the condition of the child's illness. Reducing the impact of hospitalization experienced by children while undergoing treatment (Dayani, Budiarti & Lestari, 2015). Worry about being left alone, fear of the dark, and fear of being hurt by pain are the most common causes of anxiety in preschool children aged 4-6 years. When a child is between 6 and 12 years old problems arise because children are still afraid of being left alone and at this age These children want parental support and help (Mulyono, et al. 2020).

## METHOD

The research design used in this research is a descriptive research design, namely research to see a picture of phenomena that occur in a certain population. Population and Sample The population in this study were all preschool children treated at Santa Elisabeth Hospital, Medan The sampling technique in this research is a side accidental technique, namely this type of accidental sampling is a sampling technique based on chance, that is, anyone who happens to meet the author can be used as a sample, if it is deemed that the person they happen to meet is suitable as a data source (Nursalam, 2020 ). Totaling 73 people. The instrument used in this research was the Spence Children's anxiety scale (SCAS) anxiety questionnaire.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.  
Characteristics of Respondents by Age (n=73)

Characteristics	f	%
3 tahun	18	24.7
4 tahun	16	21.9
5 tahun	19	26.0
6 tahun	20	27.4

Based on table 1 frequency distribution data and percentage demographic data, respondents in the highest age category were 20 people aged 6 years (27.4%), 19 people aged 5 years (26%), 3 years old as many as 18 people (24.7%) and the lowest was 4 years old, 16 people (21.9%). Preschool age is a golden period or called the golden age, so that children's development is hampered if they experience anxiety due to hospitalization (Haryadi, 2015). Preschool aged children undergoing hospitalization experience anxiety because worry about being left alone, fear of the dark, and fear of being hurt by pain are the most common causes of anxiety in preschool children aged 4-6 years (Mulyono, et al. 2020). Feelings of fear in preschool-aged children when undergoing hospitalization are more dominant than in school-aged children, because school-aged children are more afraid of being kidnapped (Kyle & Carman, 2017). Wong (2013) stated that hospitalization of children often causes the emergence of stressors that can interfere with the child's development. The child's coping ability is influenced by several factors, one of which is the age level of development, preschool age children will be more susceptible to experiencing anxiety when being cared for because preschool age is a developmental phase, where children begin to have awareness of themselves and recognize several things that are dangerous and injurious to themselves. themselves (Amalia et al 2018). Preschool children are identified with the desire to explore things

they do not yet understand, so that preschool children's anxiety is related to everything that is foreign to them (Casmirah, 2017).

Table 2.  
 Characteristics of Respondents by Gender (n=73)

Characteristics	f	%
Female	42	57.5
Male	31	42.5

Table 2 gender category, the highest was female, namely 42 people (57,5%) and the lowest was male with 31 people (42,5%). In this study, the female gender was more numerous than the male gender. Gender also influences a child's anxiety level, where some researchers say that girls undergoing hospitalization have higher levels of anxiety than boys because of brain and hormonal differences between boys and girls (Saputro, 2017). Preschool age boys respond lower to hospitalization than girls. Boys have a faster development rate than girls. Girls are more sensitive in responding to emotional problems, while boys are more exploratory so they stimulate and try to develop operational thinking, seek validation and ask questions (Supartini, 2015).

Tabel 3.  
 Preschool Children's Anxiety

		Anxiety			
		f	%	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Severe anxiety	49	67.1	67.1	67.1
	Moderate anxiety	24	32.9	32.9	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 3 the level of anxiety, the Severe anxiety was in the severe category as many as 49 people (67.1%) and the lowest was in the moderate category as many as 24 people (32.9%) this was characterized by children always crying when their parents were not near them, crying and being afraid when they saw doctors and nurses, crying when they saw injection needles by nurses, afraid of talking to doctors and nurses, afraid of nursing actions, afraid of going to the playground without parents, children have to play to forget bad things, children cry if their parents leave them The author assumes that children's anxiety levels are influenced by several other factors such as age, experience in hospital and gender. This is supported in Tsai's (2007) research, the younger the child, the higher the anxiety due to hospitalization. Preschool aged children are more likely to experience hospitalization stress because of their age, their cognitive abilities are still limited in understanding hospitalization. Gender also influences children's anxiety levels, where some researchers say that girls undergoing hospitalization have higher levels of anxiety than boys because of brain and hormonal differences between boys and girls (Saputro, 2017).

This is supported by the results of research conducted by Wahyuni (2016) from 90 respondents. It was found that the majority of respondents were at a severe level of anxiety, namely 55 respondents (61.1%) and a small portion experienced a mild level of anxiety, namely 17 respondents (38, 9%). Wong (2013) stated that hospitalization of children often causes the emergence of stressors that can interfere with the child's development. The child's coping ability is influenced by several factors. According to Wong, these factors are age development level, previous experience of illness, separation or hospitalization, the existence of a support system or support from the surrounding environment, natural or acquired coping skills and the seriousness of the disease diagnosis. From

a social aspect, pre-school children are starting to get to know their environment, friends and those closest to them. In normal situations, children tend to be able to adapt to new environments and friends that are appropriate to their developmental age. When a child is sick and must be treated, a special approach, attention and explanation is needed to the child (Harahap, 2019).

Children's anxiety responses due to being treated vary greatly. There are children who are very easy to adapt, there are those who are very difficult which can increase the child's anxiety. Being in a new environment where children are cared for is an unpleasant experience. As in research (Syafriani, 2018), not all pre-school children adapt easily, and many children feel uncomfortable with the environment where they are cared for and also the hospitalization activities. For children who have the experience of being treated, they give different reactions, the children quickly adapt and cooperate, in this case the role of the family, the role of the staff has a strong influence in reducing the anxiety of preschool children undergoing hospitalization.

## CONCLUSION

The highest level of anxiety among preschool children undergoing hospitalization was in the severe anxiety category, as many as 49 people (67.1%) were severe because the children were afraid of the hospital atmosphere, afraid of the care provided, the children always cried when their parents were not near them, cried and afraid when seeing doctors and nurses, crying when seeing injection needles by nurses

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