



## NURSES' CARING BEHAVIOR, PARENTAL ANXIETY AND SATISFACTION IN PEDIATRIC INPATIENT WARD

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### ABSTRACT

Caring behavior should consistently be applied by nurses in all care settings, including pediatric inpatient wards. Children undergoing hospitalization will experience traumatic and highly stressful events, this condition can lead to anxiety in parents. Caring can reduce anxiety for both the child and parents. Furthermore, if nurses implement caring optimally, patients will feel satisfied, leading to an improvement in the quality of nursing services. This research aims to identify the relationship between nurses' caring behavior and parental satisfaction and anxiety in pediatric inpatient wards. The research design utilizes descriptive correlational with a cross-sectional approach involving 97 parents sampled through quota sampling. The instrument for measuring caring behavior uses the Caring Assessment Tools (CAT), a satisfaction questionnaire containing five SERVQUAL dimensions, and a parental anxiety questionnaire using the Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale. Spearman rank was used as data analysis. The research results indicate that almost all respondents (90.7%) do not feel anxious, the majority of respondents (75.3%) are highly satisfied with the service, and most of respondents (62.9%) assess nurses' caring behavior as adequate. Spearman-ranks test results show a significant relationship between anxiety and satisfaction with nurses' caring behavior ( $p=0.036$  &  $p=0.001$ ). These findings suggest that the better the nurses' caring behavior, the lower the level of parental anxiety, and the higher the patient satisfaction in the pediatric inpatient ward. Nurses need to undergo training and develop caring attitudes and behaviors in delivering nursing services.

Keywords: caring behavior; parental anxiety; satisfaction

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### INTRODUCTION

Worldwide data from applications regarding the implementation of the caring model among nurses indicate that the percentage of caring service quality is still low, such as 11% in Ireland and 47% in Greece. In Indonesia, Caring behavior is still relatively low, based on Usman's research in 2016 conducted in five major cities in Indonesia, which identified nine issues, including complaints about nurses being unfriendly, unsympathetic, and seldom smiling (Andrianti, 2022). Caring is a crucial aspect of providing services to patients because it can influence service quality (Andrianti, 2022); (Sukesi, 2013). There are ten carative factors or qualities that nurses should possess and demonstrate, reflecting caring behavior (Pajnkihar et al., 2017). When done correctly, it will impact patient satisfaction. Caring behavior is described as a nurse's professional behavior in providing nursing care, demonstrated through a caring attitude, attention to patients, gentle communication, affection, and empathy, fostering a good nurse-patient relationship (Andrianti, 2022).

Caring behavior in nurses can enhance patient well-being and health; moreover, patients will feel comfortable, anxiety will decrease, thereby improving the body's defense and healing (Rahayu, 2018); (Paputungan et al., 2018). Caring behavior must be consistently applied by nurses in all care settings, including pediatric inpatient wards. Children undergoing treatment in hospitals will experience traumatic and stressful situations due to the hospital's physical environment, medical equipment, healthcare professionals' attitudes, and attire. Reactions that occur when children are hospitalized include fear, frequent crying, rebellion, and seeking protection, especially from their closest family members. This condition can lead to parental anxiety (Pardede & Simamora, 2020), so nurses need to establish a good relationship with both the child and their parents through caring behavior (Paputungan et al., 2018).

Caring in nursing aims to provide nursing care through a patient-centered approach. Besides reducing anxiety in children and parents, caring can also enhance patient satisfaction with the service. Nurses who implement caring optimally, patients will feel satisfied, leading to improvements in the quality of nursing care services (Sukesi, 2013). Patient satisfaction is the level of satisfaction derived from the perceptions of patients and their families regarding healthcare services. Furthermore, satisfaction is one of the quality indicators of services in a hospital. Nurses are at the forefront of providing services to patients. Therefore, nurses play a pivotal role in influencing service quality and patient satisfaction through caring behavior towards patients (Andrianti, 2022). The most commonly used instrument for measuring patient satisfaction is the SERVQUAL scale, developed by Parasuraman et al. (Umoke et al., 2020). SERVQUAL comprises five dimensions, namely Reliability, Responsiveness, Empathy, Assurance, and Tangible. Responsiveness is the willingness to assist patients and provide prompt service by hospital staff. Reliability is the ability to deliver promised services accurately and consistently. Assurance is related to the knowledge, skills, and abilities of staff in providing services, creating trust between them. Empathy is related to the care and attention of healthcare providers to patients. Tangible focuses on hospital facilities, rooms, equipment, and environmental cleanliness.

The impact of patient satisfaction with healthcare services extends to bolstering patient trust in the hospital. This, in turn, encourages repeated utilization of the hospital's services, making it the preferred choice for medical treatment (Silvia Dora et al., 2019). This research aims to identify the relationship between nurses' caring behavior and parental satisfaction and anxiety in pediatric inpatient wards.

## **METHOD**

The method in this research is correlational descriptive with a cross-sectional approach. The variables investigated include caring behavior, parental satisfaction, and parental anxiety. The study's population comprises parents with children admitted to the pediatric inpatient ward. A sample of 97 individuals was selected using quota sampling. The instrument for measuring caring behavior consists of 41 items from the Caring Assessment Tools (CAT) questionnaire with a validity coefficient (R) ranging from 0.41 to 0.71. Additionally, the reliability test with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.917, indicating a high level of internal consistency. Parental anxiety is assessed using 20 items from the Zung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale questionnaire with a validity coefficient (R) ranging from 0.66 to 0.74, furthermore, the reliability test, with a Cronbach's alpha score of 0.85, also indicates a high level of internal consistency (Nuraeni dan Mirwanti, 2017). The satisfaction was measured through 25 questions covering responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles dimensions. The validity test results for the satisfaction questionnaire, with an R value ranging from 0.641 to 0.812. Additionally, the reliability test yielded a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.896, indicating a high

degree of internal consistency in the measured variables. Researchers previously obtained ethical approval and research permission. The research involved distributing questionnaires to parents with children in the pediatric inpatient ward at the Sumedang District General Hospital. Prior to questionnaire completion, respondents were provided with informed consent. Subsequently, data analysis was conducted using frequency distribution and Spearman rank analysis.

**RESULTS**

Table 1  
Overview of parents' anxiety in the pediatric inpatient ward (n=97)

Parent Anxiety	f	%
Moderate anxiety	3	3.1
Mild anxiety	6	6.2
No anxiety	88	90.7

Table 1, it is evident that almost all respondents (90.7%) did not experience anxiety when their children were admitted to the pediatric inpatient ward at Sumedang District General Hospital.

Table 2.  
Overview of parental satisfaction with services in pediatric inpatient room (n=97)

Satisfactions' level	f	%
Satisfied	24	24.7
Very Satisfied	73	75.3

Table 2, the majority of respondents (75,3%) very satisfied with services in pediatric inpatient room in Sumedang District General Hospital.

Table 3.  
Overview of Nurse Caring Behavior in Pediatric Inpatient ward (n=97)

Nurses' Caring Behavior	f	%
Good	17	17.5
Adequate	61	62.9
Insufficient	19	19.6

Table 3, it show that the majority of respondent (62,9%) assessed nurses' caring behavior as adequate. However, there are 17.5% of respondents who perceive the nurse's caring behavior as insufficient.

Table 4.  
Relationship between nurse caring behavior and parental anxiety in pediatric inpatient ward (n=97)

Anxiety Level	Nurses' Caring Behavior								p-value
	Insufficient		Adequate		Good		Total		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Midle Anxiety	3	3.09	0	0	0	0	3	3.09	0,001
Mild Anxiety	2	2.06	4	4.12	0	0	6	6.19	
No anxiety	12	12.37	57	58.76	19	19.58	88	90.72	

Table 4, there are significant relationship between nurses' caring behavior with parents' anxiety in pediatric inpatient room (P=0,001). Most of the respondents were not anxious, assessing nurses' caring behavior in the sufficient category (58.76%).

Table 5.  
Relationship between nurse caring behavior and parental satisfaction toward services in pediatric inpatient ward

Satisfaction level	Nurse Caring Behavior								p-value
	Insufficient		Adequate		Good		Total		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Satisfied	9	9.28	11	11.34	4	4.12	24	24.74	0,036
Very satisfied	8	8.25	50	51.55	15	15.46	73	75.26	

Table 5, there are significant relationship between nurse caring behavior with parental satisfaction ( $p=0,036$ ). Most respondents, who assessed the caring behavior of nurses within the category of adequacy, expressed a high level of satisfaction with the service (58,76%).

## DISCUSSION

### Nurse Caring Behavior

Caring is a sentiment of respect, concern, and appreciation for others, involving the act of paying attention, learning about preferences, and understanding how an individual thinks, behaves, and feels (Desima, 2013). The research findings indicate that a majority (62.9%) of respondents assess the nurse's caring behavior as adequate. There are 17.5% of respondents who perceive the nurse's caring behavior as insufficient. This aligns with a study conducted by Firmansyah in 2019, stating that a significant proportion (52.1%) of clients consider the nurse's caring behavior to be sufficient. Clients view caring actions by nurses as expressions of love, togetherness, empathy, and the ability to fulfill all client needs (Firmansyah et al., 2019). The better the nurse's caring behavior towards patients and families, the more satisfied clients are with the service, fostering a therapeutic relationship between nurses and clients. emphasizing that a positive nurse-patient relationship during hospital care can influence caring behavior and satisfaction (Calong & Soriano, 2018).

Caring is the essence of nursing and serves as the foundation that distinguishes nurses from other healthcare professionals (Azizi-Fini et al., 2012). This resonates with Watson's state that caring is central to nursing practice, urging nurses to further develop their compassion towards clients (Triwijayanti, 2015). The implementation of caring behavior by nurses enhances physical healing, builds mutual trust, and creates a more comfortable environment. In the study, the highest respondent ratings were for the statement that nurses regularly check patients according to the schedule. This indicates that clients feel comfortable when nurses provide nursing interventions as agreed upon. The trust between patients and nurses fosters positive perceptions of caring behavior. Clients perceive the nurse's caring behavior as a form of attention and concern for patients and their families (Nurbiyati, 2017). The demonstrated caring behavior by nurses is evident, as respondents acknowledge the nurse's attentiveness to patients during their hospitalization.

Based on Table 3, it is evident that there are still respondents (17.5%) who perceive the nurse's behavior as lacking. The assessment of low caring behavior in this study is related to statements indicating that nurses inadequately assist patients in daily needs, do not mention the patient's name when speaking, and do not inquire about their hospital experiences. The researcher assumes that the persistently low caring behavior may be influenced by various factors, including work experience, education level, workload, and age. The indication of low caring behavior emphasizes the ongoing need for nurses to enhance their caring behavior in providing nursing care to patients, ensuring positive evaluations from both patients and their families.

### **Parental Satisfaction with Services**

Based on the research results, the majority of respondents (75.3%) expressed high satisfaction with pediatric inpatient services. This indicates a positive trend wherein RSUD Sumedang continues to enhance the quality of its services. This research aligns with the study conducted by Mustika and Sari (2018), wherein 83.3% of patients expressed satisfaction with the services at RSUD Jagakarsa. Similarly, Krisnawati's research in 2017 revealed that a significant majority of respondents expressed high satisfaction with the inpatient services at RS Panti Waluya Malang. Patient satisfaction holds paramount importance for hospital leadership amid the increasing number of healthcare facilities. Hospitals aspire to achieve high levels of patient satisfaction, not only for the benefit of the patients themselves but also for the overall development of the hospital (Abramowitz et al., 1987). Furthermore, patient satisfaction stands as a crucial metric in assessing healthcare service quality, as it gauges the effectiveness of healthcare professionals in meeting patient needs (Umoke et al., 2020).

Patient satisfaction serves as an evaluative criterion for the quality of nursing services provided, where satisfaction is intricately linked to individual experiences and perspectives, making it a complex aspect to alter (Agritubella, 2018). The delivery of quality nursing care is essential through the systematic, accurate, and continuous improvement of nursing care to consumers/patients. This approach ensures that patients are satisfied with the services they receive. When the services align with the patients' needs, it contributes to their overall satisfaction. Providing optimal nursing care has a positive impact on patients, ensuring they are well-served, and their issues are effectively addressed. (Krisnawati & Utami, 2017). The impact of patient satisfaction with healthcare services extends to bolstering patient trust in the hospital. This, in turn, encourages repeated utilization of the hospital's services, making it the preferred choice for medical treatment (Silvia Dora et al., 2019).

Various factors contribute to a patient's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with healthcare services, including healthcare personnel, financial considerations, government policies, accessibility, waste disposal, as well as registration procedures, technical services, and communication (Umoke et al., 2020). Satisfaction with nursing services is closely related to the quality of nursing care. The better the quality of nursing services provided, the more positively it impacts patient satisfaction, and conversely, poor service quality has a negative impact on patient satisfaction (Fadilah, & Yusianto, 2019).

### **Parental Anxiety**

The research findings indicate that almost all (90.7%) parents do not feel anxious, 6.2% experience mild anxiety, and 3.1% experience moderate anxiety. The hospitalization of a child in a hospital can elicit anxious reactions from parents (Laksmi et al., 2021). Anxiety is an unclear fear accompanied by feelings of uncertainty and insecurity. It refers to a mood that emerges as a reaction to a situation (Stuart, 2016). Mild anxiety can occur during the stresses of daily life, and at this stage, an individual's alertness and field of perception increase. On the other hand, someone experiencing moderate anxiety tends to focus only on significant matters, narrowing their field of perception. Despite this, individuals remain capable of following commands if directed to do so. Manifestations include increased heart rate and respiratory frequency, narrowed field of perception, decreased ability to concentrate, selective and focused attention on stimuli that do not escalate anxiety, irritability, forgetfulness, impatience, anger, and crying (Stuart, 2016).

Anxiety can be experienced by every patient or family of a patient who is in hospital, this feeling of anxiety is different for each person. If anxiety does not receive attention in an

environment, then anxiety can cause serious problems (Burnard and Marrison, 2009; Potter and Perry, 2005; Paputungan et al, 2018). Anxiety in parents with hospitalized children can be caused by various factors such as chronic illness, unpleasant care, family economic level. Furthermore, age, gender, level of education, knowledge level, length of hospital stay, and the caring behavior of nurses can also influence anxiety in parents (Rahayu, 2018). This anxiety can increase if parents feel they lack information about their child's illness from the relevant hospital. On the other hand, parents will not feel anxious if the causal factors are resolved properly (Gusti et al., 2021)

Anxiety can manifest among parents following their child's 24-hour hospitalization. This anxiety arises due to medical interventions or the hospitalization experience perceived by their child. Parental anxiety can impact the child's anxiety levels, so dealing with parental anxiety can contribute to the child's healing process. Parents who are anxious will influence their children to feel anxious as well; conversely, if parents are not anxious, their children will be more calm and less anxious (Gandana & Waluyanti, 2019). In the research findings, 3.1% of parents experienced moderate anxiety. Moderate anxiety may arise, especially when their child is hospitalized for the first time. To alleviate parental anxiety, parents can strive for acceptance and find solace in prayer for the recovery of their child. (Rahayu, 2018).

### **Relationship between Nurses' Caring Behavior and Parental Satisfaction with Services**

Based on Table 5, it is shown that there is a significant relationship between the nurse's caring behavior and parental satisfaction with services ( $p=0.036$ ). The majority of respondents who assessed the nurse's caring behavior as sufficient felt very satisfied with the services (58.76%). Patient satisfaction has become a crucial indicator in assessing service quality, especially in nursing care. Nurses play a frontline role in providing hospital services as a substantial portion of care is administered by them (Firmansyah, 2019; Azizi-Fini, 2012; Mohamed, 2015). A significant portion of respondents who rated the nurse's caring behavior as sufficient expressed high satisfaction with the services (58.76%). This underscores the importance of the nurse's caring behavior in service delivery to patients. The exhibited caring behavior by nurses enhances service quality, feelings of security, reduces anxiety, and increases patient satisfaction (Azizi-Fini et al., 2012). The perceived caring behavior of nurses by patients and patient satisfaction has been significantly correlated. The better the nurse's caring behavior in providing nursing care, the more satisfied the patients are with the service (Mailani & Fitri, 2017).

This research aligns with the study by Calong & Soriano (2018), indicating a significant relationship between the nurse's caring behavior and patient satisfaction ( $p=0.042$ ). Andrianti's study in 2022 demonstrates a significant relationship between the nurse's caring behavior and patient satisfaction ( $p=0.000$ ). These results indicate that patient satisfaction is influenced by the nurse's caring behavior. Creating a caring environment and improving the nurse's caring behavior will enhance the quality of patient care and increase patient satisfaction (Mohamed et al., 2015). The findings of this study differ from research by Mohamed et al, in 2015, which states no relationship between the nurse's caring behavior and patient satisfaction ( $p=0.06$ ). This difference may occur due to other variables influencing patient satisfaction and caring behavior, such as workload, insufficient nursing staff, and a high number of patients.

In this study, respondents provided a lower rating for caring behavior, yet they reported high satisfaction (9.28%). The researcher assumes this could be attributed to other factors influencing patient satisfaction, such as workload, insufficient nursing staff, and a high patient load. To enhance patient satisfaction, it is essential to improve nurses' understanding of the

significance of caring behavior. Furthermore, motivating nurses to enhance the quality of caring in providing nursing care is crucial. Additionally, monitoring nurses' caring behavior during the implementation of nursing care and emphasizing caring principles are necessary steps in achieving this goal (Octaviani et al., 2020).

### **Relationship between Nurses' Caring Behavior and Parental Anxiety**

The research results indicate that the majority of respondents who did not feel anxious assessed the nurse's caring behavior as sufficient (58.76%). Respondents who reported good caring behavior by nurses and felt not anxious accounted for 19.58%. The Spearman rank test results reveal a significant relationship between caring behavior and parental anxiety for children admitted to pediatric inpatient ward ( $p$ -value = 0.001). This highlights the importance of nurses implementing good caring behavior to reduce parental anxiety. findings align with Pardede's research (2020) demonstrating a significant relationship between caring behavior and parental anxiety ( $p=0.03$ ). The study by Ginting et al., (2023) shows a relationship between nurse's caring behavior and the level of parental anxiety regarding the procedure of infusion in children. This is reinforced by Twistiandayani & Muzakki (2017), stating the influence of nurse's caring behavior on the pre-operative anxiety level of patients' families. The better the nurse's caring behavior, the lower the level of parental anxiety.

Parents often find themselves unprepared for the changes and conditions that occur when their child is hospitalized. Every parent hopes for the recovery of their sick child and expects clear information about their child's health condition and the procedures to be undertaken (Rahayu, 2018). Parental anxiety for children hospitalized is associated with the length of hospitalization. Parents concern themselves with treatment, costs, and the condition in the care room. This anxiety diminishes when health professionals, especially nurses, approach and provide information regarding the child's treatment process (Pardede & Simamora, 2020). Caring can reduce anxiety, making patients feel secure, and improving the quality of care (Kusuma et al., 2021). In the study, 12.37% of parents were found to be not anxious even though they assessed the nurse's caring behavior as insufficient. This condition can occur because there are other factors such as age, education, health condition, and economic status, which can influence parental anxiety (Anwar et al., 2018). Caring behavior is essential to address parental anxiety. This is because caring behavior serves as a primary focus in nursing practice, encompassing humanistic values, responsive attitudes, and the responsibility to meet patient expectations. (Prihandhani & Leda Kio, 2019)

### **CONCLUSION**

This research concludes that caring behavior can have an impact on the anxiety of parents whose children are being treated in the pediatric inpatient ward. Additionally, caring behavior can also influence parents' satisfaction with the services in the pediatric inpatient ward. Nurses need to undergo training that enhances their caring attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, nurses need to develop caring attitudes and behaviors in delivering nursing services.

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