

Effective Communication as The Key to Patient Safety at Simpang Lima Gumul Regional Public Hospital, Kediri Regency, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Actively participate in discussions regarding care. This community engagement program aimed to improve patients' and families' knowledge of effective communication as a strategy to enhance patient safety. The program was conducted in the Kasuari Inpatient Ward of Simpang Lima Gumul Regional Public Hospital, Kediri Regency, Indonesia, involving 20 hospitalized patients with various internal medicine diagnoses and their primary family caregivers. Educational activities included interactive lectures, group discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and distribution of educational leaflets. Participants' knowledge was assessed using pre-test and post-test questionnaires and analyzed descriptively. The mean knowledge score increased from 59.5 before the intervention to 90.5 afterward, representing an increase of 31 points. The proportion of participants with good knowledge increased from 0% to 100%, while moderate and poor knowledge decreased from 65% and 35%, respectively, to 0%. Participants also demonstrated greater awareness of the importance of providing accurate health information, asking questions, and communicating actively with healthcare professionals during hospitalization. The findings indicate that patient and family education can substantially improve knowledge and support active participation in patient safety. Integrating similar educational activities into routine hospital services may strengthen communication practices, enhance patient engagement, and contribute to a safer and more patient-centered healthcare environment.

Keywords : Effective Communication, Patient Safety, Patient Engagement

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INTRODUCTION

Patient safety is one of the key indicators of healthcare quality and has become a global priority in healthcare systems worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines patient safety as the prevention of avoidable harm through the implementation of a safety

culture, effective communication, safe healthcare systems, and active stakeholder involvement. Globally, approximately one in ten patients experiences an adverse event during healthcare, with more than half of these incidents considered preventable. In low- and middle-income countries, an estimated 134 million adverse events occur annually, resulting in more than 2.6 million preventable deaths (Organization, 2019, 2021). Besides threatening patient outcomes, preventable adverse events also impose substantial economic burdens on healthcare systems, accounting for nearly 15% of hospital expenditures in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (Development, 2020; Slawomirski A.; Klazinga N., 2017).

Effective communication is widely recognized as one of the most important strategies for improving patient safety. Clear, accurate, timely, and understandable communication facilitates information exchange among healthcare professionals, patients, and families, whereas communication failures remain a leading cause of medical errors, including patient misidentification, medication errors, delayed diagnosis, and inappropriate clinical interventions. Previous studies consistently demonstrate that effective communication improves care coordination, patient safety culture, and healthcare quality (Burgess C., 2020; Fajriyah et al., 2023; Irwanti et al., 2022; Wong, 2020). Consequently, effective communication has become an essential component of patient-centred healthcare.

Recent healthcare approaches increasingly recognize patients and families as active partners rather than passive recipients of care. Patient and family engagement enables two-way communication, facilitates the exchange of accurate health information, and encourages patients to participate in healthcare decisions. Studies have consistently shown that patient engagement improves communication, patient participation, patient satisfaction, healthcare quality, and patient safety (Hickmann, 2022; Lee, 2021; Marzban, 2022; Newman, 2021). These findings are supported by the Patient and Family Engagement Framework, which emphasizes collaboration between healthcare professionals, patients, and families at individual, organizational, and system levels (Carman P.; Maurer M., 2013). Likewise, systematic reviews have demonstrated that patient engagement contributes to better patient experience, service quality, transparency, and patient safety (Bombard, 2018; Chudyk, 2022; Sagen et al., 2023; Wiles, 2022), while WHO (Organization, 2023) recommends empowering patients and families as active partners throughout healthcare delivery.

Effective communication is also closely associated with shared decision-making and health literacy. Shared decision-making encourages patients to understand available treatment options and participate in healthcare decisions, thereby improving patient satisfaction, treatment adherence, and clinical decision-making (Elwyn, 2017; Hughes, 2022; Joseph-Williams, 2019; Stacey, 2017). In addition, adequate health literacy enables patients to understand health information, communicate effectively with healthcare professionals, and participate actively in their care. Conversely, limited health literacy may hinder communication and compromise patient safety. Previous studies have highlighted health literacy as an important determinant of effective communication, patient engagement, and educational interventions aimed at improving patient knowledge and safety (Luiz, 2022; Muscat et al., 2021; Nutbeam J. E., 2021).

In Indonesia, effective communication has been formally recognized through the Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 11 of 2017 concerning Patient Safety and is reinforced by the Indonesian Hospital Accreditation Standards (SNARS), which identify effective communication as one of the essential elements of quality improvement and patient safety (Sakit, 2018). Nevertheless, most educational initiatives have focused on strengthening communication among healthcare professionals through structured communication models, such as Situation, Background, Assessment, Recommendation,

interprofessional communication, and clinical handovers. Educational interventions that empower hospitalized patients and their families to become active communication partners remain limited, particularly in regional public hospitals.

Direct observations conducted during the residency program in the Kasuari Inpatient Ward of Simpang Lima Gumul Regional Public Hospital, Kediri Regency, indicated that some patients and their family caregivers were still reluctant to communicate important health information, including medical history, medication allergies, current medications, and changes in health conditions during hospitalization. In addition, they were often hesitant to ask healthcare professionals about diagnoses, medical procedures, or treatment plans. These conditions may result in incomplete clinical information and increase the risk of patient safety incidents. Therefore, this community engagement program implemented an educational intervention entitled *Effective Communication as the Key to Patient Safety* for 20 patients' family caregivers. The program aimed to improve patients' and families' knowledge of effective communication and encourage their active participation in supporting patient safety during hospitalization.

METHOD

The community engagement program was conducted based on an Extension Activity Plan (EAP) entitled *Effective Communication as the Key to Patient Safety* for hospitalized patients and their family caregivers in the Kasuari Inpatient Ward of Simpang Lima Gumul Regional Public Hospital, Kediri Regency. The educational materials covered patient safety, effective communication among patients, family caregivers, and healthcare professionals, essential health information to be communicated to healthcare providers, patients' rights to ask questions, and communication strategies during hospitalization. The education was delivered in a 30-minute interactive session using lectures, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, and brief demonstrations supported by leaflets and an X-banner.

Prior to participation, all participants received an explanation of the program and provided written informed consent. The effectiveness of the educational intervention was evaluated using pre-test and post-test questionnaires, each consisting of 10 questions assessing participants' knowledge of patient safety and effective communication. Each correct answer was scored 10 and each incorrect answer 0, yielding a total score ranging from 0 to 100. Knowledge levels were categorized as good (76–100), moderate (56–75), and poor (≤ 55). The pre-test was administered before, and the post-test immediately after, the educational session. The results were analyzed descriptively to evaluate changes in participants' knowledge. As a token of appreciation, participants who actively participated in the discussion received a small souvenir.

RESULTS

Output

The community service program was conducted on 25 June 2026 in the waiting area of the Kasuari Inpatient Ward at RSUD Simpang Lima Gumul, Kediri Regency, involving 20 hospitalized patients and their family caregivers. The educational session was implemented according to the planned schedule and focused on effective communication as a key strategy for improving patient safety. The topics included patient safety principles, effective communication among patients, family caregivers, and healthcare professionals, essential health information that should be communicated during hospitalization, patients' rights to ask questions, and practical communication strategies.

Educational materials were delivered interactively using lectures, discussions,

question-and-answer sessions, leaflets, and an educational X-banner. Participants actively engaged throughout the session by asking questions regarding medication allergies, medical history, diagnoses, medical procedures, and treatment plans, indicating strong interest in the topic.

The program successfully produced several outputs, including the implementation of patient safety education, the distribution of educational leaflets, the installation of an educational X-banner in the inpatient waiting area, the completion of pre-test and post-test knowledge assessments, and documentation of the community engagement activities.

Outcome

The effectiveness of the community service program was evaluated using pre-test and post-test assessments to measure changes in participants' knowledge regarding effective communication as a strategy to support patient safety. The results demonstrated a substantial improvement in participants' knowledge following the educational intervention. The mean knowledge score increased from 59.5 in the pre-test to 90.5 in the post-test, representing an increase of 31 points (Figure 1). This finding indicates that the educational intervention effectively enhanced participants' understanding of the importance of effective communication during hospitalization.

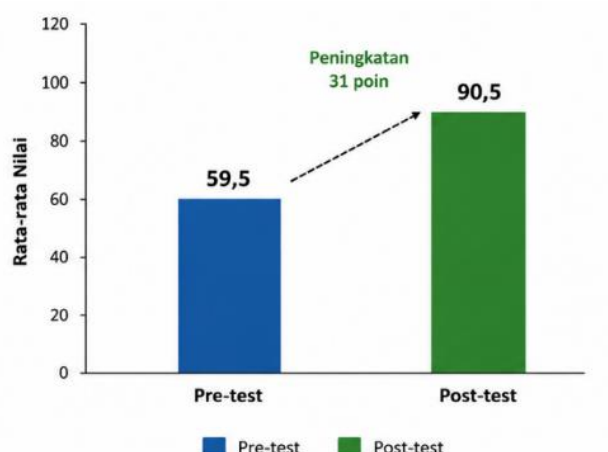


Figure.1 Comparison of Mean Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Changes were also observed in the distribution of participants' knowledge levels (Figure 2). Before the educational session, most participants had a moderate level of knowledge (13 participants; 65%), while the remaining participants had poor knowledge (7 participants; 35%). Following the intervention, all participants (100%) achieved a good level of knowledge, with no participants remaining in either the moderate or poor categories. These results demonstrate that the educational program successfully improved participants' understanding of effective communication and their role in supporting patient safety during hospital care.

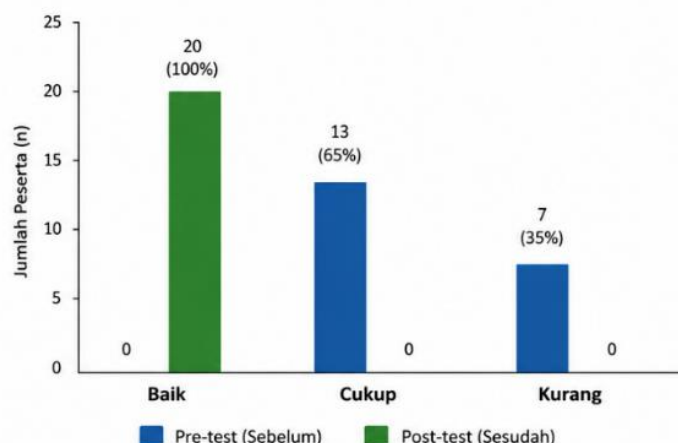


Figure.2 Distribution of Participants' Knowledge Levels Before and After the Educational Intervention

The improvement in participants' knowledge may be attributed to the interactive educational approach, which combined lectures, discussions, question-and-answer sessions, demonstrations, and printed educational media in the form of leaflets and an educational X-banner. This approach facilitated participants' understanding of the importance of communicating essential health information, including previous medical history, medication allergies, current medications, comorbidities, and changes in health status during hospitalization. Participants also demonstrated greater awareness of their right to ask questions regarding diagnoses, medical procedures, and treatment plans, thereby encouraging more active participation in healthcare. Similar findings have been reported by (Luiz, 2022), who concluded that educational interventions improve patients' knowledge, participation, and patient safety. Likewise, (Lee, 2021) demonstrated that patient and family engagement interventions strengthen communication and increase patient participation, while (Nutbeam, 2021; Nutbeam J. E., 2021) emphasized that improved health literacy enables patients to communicate more effectively with healthcare professionals. (Muscat et al., 2021) further highlighted that adequate health literacy is essential for meaningful patient engagement and shared decision-making.

These findings are also consistent with previous studies showing that structured educational interventions improve communication and patient engagement in healthcare (Fajriyah et al., 2023; Irwanti et al., 2022). Active patient engagement has been recognized as an essential component of patient safety because it promotes collaboration between patients, families, and healthcare professionals while facilitating safer healthcare delivery (Bombard, 2018; Carman P.; Maurer M., 2013; Organization, 2023). Therefore, communication-based educational interventions may contribute not only to increasing patients' knowledge but also to strengthening patient safety culture within healthcare organizations.

Overall, this community service program successfully improved the knowledge of hospitalized patients and their family caregivers regarding effective communication and encouraged more active participation in interactions with healthcare professionals. These findings support previous evidence that effective communication, patient engagement, and health education contribute to improving healthcare quality and patient safety (Hickmann, 2022; Sagen et al., 2023; Wong, 2020). Integrating communication-based educational programs into routine hospital services may therefore represent a sustainable strategy for strengthening patient safety culture and promoting patient-centred care.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that health education on effective communication improves patients' and family caregivers' understanding of their role in supporting patient safety. Better communication enables patients and their families to provide accurate health information, seek clarification when needed, and participate more actively in healthcare decision-making. Such participation is an essential component of patient-centred care and contributes to reducing communication-related errors while promoting safer healthcare delivery.

These findings suggest that empowering patients and family caregivers through education complements existing patient safety initiatives, which have traditionally focused on improving healthcare professionals' communication skills. Therefore, integrating communication education into routine hospital health promotion programs may strengthen patient participation and reinforce the implementation of a patient safety culture within hospital settings.

Several challenges were encountered during program implementation. The dynamic environment of the inpatient waiting area meant that some participants had to leave the session temporarily for medical examinations or treatments. In addition, differences in participants' educational backgrounds and health literacy affected their ability to understand the educational materials, while some family caregivers remained primarily focused on accompanying their hospitalized relatives. Nevertheless, these challenges did not substantially affect the implementation of the program. The use of simple language, opportunities for interactive discussion, and the distribution of educational leaflets helped participants understand the key messages and review the information independently after the session. Future programs may benefit from conducting education sessions in smaller groups or at more flexible times to maximize participant engagement and learning outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This community service program demonstrated that health education on effective communication effectively improved the knowledge of patients and their family caregivers regarding their role in supporting patient safety during hospitalization. The educational intervention encouraged participants to understand the importance of providing complete health information, asking questions, and actively participating in communication with healthcare professionals as part of patient safety efforts. These findings suggest that patient and family empowerment through health education is a practical strategy for strengthening patient safety culture in hospitals. Therefore, integrating effective communication education into routine hospital health promotion programs is recommended to enhance patient engagement and contribute to continuous improvements in healthcare quality.

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