



The Relationship Between Healthcare Professionals' Therapeutic Communication and Patient Satisfaction in Diabetes Mellitus

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Keywords:

Therapeutic
Communication;
Patient Satisfaction;
DM Patients.

Abstract

Background: In the context of patients with Diabetes Mellitus (DM), effective therapeutic communication is essential for enhancing patients' understanding of their condition, adherence to treatment, and satisfaction with healthcare services. Previous findings indicate that the main reasons for patient dissatisfaction include healthcare staff communicating too quickly, insufficient number of doctors resulting in brief interaction time, limited competency of healthcare providers, and nurses not being attentive when listening to patient complaints. **Objective:** To examine the relationship between healthcare professionals' therapeutic communication and the level of satisfaction among DM patients. **Methods:** This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional design. The population consisted of all patients receiving treatment at the Banda Raya Community Health Center. Data were collected using purposive sampling, resulting in a sample of 38 participants. Statistical analysis was conducted using the Chi-square test. **Results:** There was a significant relationship between therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction among Diabetes Mellitus patients, with a p-value of 0.013. **Conclusion:** The better the therapeutic communication implemented by healthcare providers, the higher the satisfaction of DM patients in managing their healthcare.



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INTRODUCTION

Therapeutic communication is a fundamental aspect of healthcare services that contributes to the quality of interactions between healthcare professionals and patients. This type of communication not only involves conveying medical information but also establishing empathetic relationships, providing emotional support, and understanding the patient's condition. Therapeutic communication refers to the interaction between nurses and patients, designed to facilitate therapeutic goals and achieve optimal and effective recovery (Muhith, 2018). Such communication can occur when nurses prioritize fostering trust and reliability with their patients. It is built upon a

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professional approach aimed at meeting client needs and promoting patient recovery (Pertiwi et al., 2022).

In the context of patients with Diabetes Mellitus (DM), effective therapeutic communication is key to improving patients' understanding of their illness, adherence to treatment, and satisfaction with healthcare services. Diabetes Mellitus, commonly known as diabetes, is a chronic condition that affects individuals throughout their lives. It arises due to metabolic dysfunction in the pancreas, characterized by elevated blood glucose levels or hyperglycemia, caused by reduced insulin production from the pancreas (Listifani, 2024).

According to data from the International Diabetes Federation (IDF), Indonesia ranks fifth among countries with the highest number of diabetes cases, reaching 19.5 million in 2021, and is projected to increase to 28.6 million by 2045. This situation has become a significant concern for the Ministry of Health, as diabetes is often referred to as the "mother of all diseases." Like a mother giving birth to many children, diabetes can trigger various other health complications (Dungga & Indiartri, 2024). Diabetes Mellitus is a chronic disease that requires long-term management and active patient involvement in care. Patient satisfaction with healthcare services heavily depends on the extent to which they feel heard, understood, and provided with clear information by healthcare providers (Nurwahyuni et al., 2024).

Community Health Centers (Puskesmas) play a crucial role as primary healthcare facilities by providing education and guidance for DM patients to manage their condition effectively. Nursing services in puskesmas are influenced by three main aspects: the types of available services, management systems as administrators, and nursing staff as service providers. These aspects collectively ensure patient satisfaction or the overall experience of puskesmas service users. Sina and Kim (2019) define satisfaction as a feeling of pleasure or contentment resulting from an experience with a product or service. This is supported by research conducted by Suhara (2024), which found that therapeutic communication significantly influences DM patient satisfaction ($p < 0.05$).

Providing services with a therapeutic approach can motivate DM patients toward recovery. Research by Kalidupa & Maria (2021) reported that effective therapeutic communication by nurses in the inpatient wards of Batu Baptis Hospital encouraged DM patients to be motivated to recover. Conversely, Nababan *et al.* (2024) in the Siata Barita Tapanuli Community Health Center found that the aspects of reliability and empathy were the most dissatisfying for patients; issues included uncomfortable waiting areas, lack of dedicated security units, rapid communication by staff, insufficient number of doctors resulting in brief interaction time, and inadequate competency of healthcare providers.

Further analysis using Importance-Performance Analysis indicated that the empathy dimension should prioritize nurses listening to patients' complaints regarding their illness. This finding relates to the importance of nurses' friendliness. However, interviews revealed that patients perceived nurse friendliness as a critical factor affecting service satisfaction. Several complaints noted that some nurses were not attentive when listening to patient concerns (Geofani et al., 2023).

The prevalence of DM in Aceh Province is notably high, described as a "time bomb" ready to explode. This was highlighted by the Chair of the Indonesian Endocrinology Association (Perkeni) Aceh, Dr. Hendra Zufry SpPD K-EMD FINASIM, during a visit to Harian Serambi on May 17, 2024. According to the data, 189,464 DM cases were identified, with 108,684 patients receiving standard care, accounting for 57.36 percent. This represents an increase from 2021, when there were 184,527 patients, with 97,131 receiving standard care (53 percent) (Ramadhan, 2024).

Data from all puskesmas in Banda Aceh show that DM cases numbered 10,834 in 2021 and

increased to 11,039 in 2022 (Cahyani et al., 2024). The Banda Raya Community Health Center reported 757 DM patients in 2022. Furthermore, Banda Raya puskesmas ranked fifth highest in terms of DM cases among all health centers in the region (Dinas Kesehatan Aceh, 2023)

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional design, in which data were collected at a single point in time (point-in-time approach). In this design, both dependent and independent variables are measured simultaneously. The sampling technique used was accidental sampling, a method in which participants are selected based on their availability or convenience at the time of the study.

The population and sample were obtained during fieldwork conducted over one consecutive week, scheduled between February and April 2025. Data were collected through interviews using structured questionnaires, which assessed the implementation of therapeutic communication by healthcare professionals and patient satisfaction. The data sources included both primary and secondary data.

Data analysis involved univariate analysis (age, education, and occupation) and bivariate analysis using the Chi-Square statistical test, performed with SPSS Statistics version 22.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The measurement of respondent characteristics in this study is presented in the table below:

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics Based on Age, Education, and Occupation at Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh, 2025 (n=38)

Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	<30 years	2	5.3
	31-40 years	2	5.3
	41-50 years	8	21.0
	>50 years	26	68.4
Education	Elementary	4	10.4
	Junior High	5	13.5
	Senior High	23	60.4
	Diploma/Bachelor/Master	6	15.7
Occupation	Employed	11	28.9
	Unemployed	27	71.1

Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were aged >50 years (26 respondents; 68.4%), most had a senior high school education (23 respondents; 60.4%), and most were unemployed (27 respondents; 71.1%).

Univariate Analysis

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Healthcare Professionals' Therapeutic Communication at Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh, 2025 (n=38)

Therapeutic Communication	n	%
Very Good	20	52.6

Good	14	36.8
Less Good	4	10.6
Total	38	100

Table 2 indicates that the majority of DM patients perceived healthcare professionals' therapeutic communication as very good (20 respondents; 52.6%), followed by good (14 respondents; 36.8%), and less good (4 respondents; 10.6%).

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Patient Satisfaction at Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh, 2025 (n=38)

Patient Satisfaction	n	%
Dissatisfied	1	2.6
Satisfied	37	97.4
Total	38	100

Table 3 shows that most patients were satisfied with the services (37 respondents; 97.4%), while a minority were dissatisfied (1 respondent; 2.6%).

Bivariate Analysis

Table 4. Relationship Between Healthcare Professionals' Therapeutic Communication and DM Patient Satisfaction at Banda Raya Community Health Center

Therapeutic Communication	Patient Satisfaction		%	P Value
	Dissatisfied	Satisfied		
Very Good	0	20	20	52.6
Good	0	14	14	36.8
Less Good	1	3	4	10.6
Total	1	37	38	100

Based on Table 4, among the 38 respondents, 20 respondents (52.6%) rated therapeutic communication as very good and reported being satisfied, while 14 respondents (36.8%) rated it as good and were satisfied. Four respondents (10.6%) considered therapeutic communication less good; among them, 3 respondents (8%) were satisfied, and 1 respondent (2.6%) was dissatisfied. The Chi-Square test yielded a ρ -value of 0.013 with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, indicating a statistically significant relationship between healthcare professionals' therapeutic communication and DM patient satisfaction at Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh.

Discussion

Based on the research conducted at Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh, the Chi-Square statistical test yielded a ρ -value of 0.013, indicating $p < \alpha = 0.05$. This result demonstrates that therapeutic communication has a very positive impact on patient satisfaction. The researchers assumed that during the orientation phase, nurses establish a trusting relationship, demonstrate acceptance, and maintain open communication. This was observed as patients reported that nurses communicated very effectively, including greeting patients, introducing themselves, and using

language that was easily understood. According to Fatmawati (2019) to build a trusting relationship, nurses must be open, honest, sincere, accept clients as they are, keep promises, and respect the client.

This view is also supported by Agustina & Isti (2021) who cite Roger's theory in Stuart G.W (1998), highlighting several characteristics of a helper (nurse) that facilitate the development of a therapeutic relationship: honesty; clarity and expressiveness; positivity; empathy rather than sympathy; ability to see issues from the client's perspective; acceptance of the client as they are; sensitivity to the client's feelings; and resistance to being influenced by the client's past or the nurse's own experiences.

Kotler (2008), as cited by Suweko & Warsito (2019), defines satisfaction as the feeling of pleasure or disappointment experienced after comparing performance (results) with expectations. If performance falls below expectations, the individual is dissatisfied; if it meets expectations, the individual is satisfied; and if performance exceeds expectations, the individual feels very satisfied and pleased.

Regarding the educational background of the 38 respondents, the majority had completed senior high school (60.4%), and most were aged >50 years (68.4%). The researchers assume that these two factors facilitate effective communication by nurses, enabling them to provide education and information that are easily understood, as patients have reached a level of knowledge maturity and life experience. According to Budi Widiyanto. (2023), age, gender, education level, and work experience collectively indicate that age is a general indicator of maturity in decision-making based on personal experience. Education reflects intelligence and cognitive ability; the higher the education level, the broader the knowledge. Education is a key factor in acquiring knowledge. Work experience allows individuals to gain knowledge and skills, which can enhance a nurse's performance.

The findings of this study align with Lucyani (2023), which investigated nurse therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction. In that study, 15 respondents (46%) reported being very satisfied, and 8 respondents (24%) reported being satisfied. Additionally, 23 respondents indicated that nurses provided attention and care during hospitalization. According to Moison, Walter dan White dalam Dwilaksono (2006), as cited by Saprianingsih (2020), factors influencing consumer satisfaction include service quality, such as staff friendliness and responsiveness. Patient satisfaction is often shaped by their first impression of nursing services, including timely service, responsiveness, and courteous care.

The alignment between nurses' therapeutic communication skills and patient satisfaction is supported by Dora et al. (2019), who investigated the meaningful relationship between nurse therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction. Their results indicated that when nurses' communication skills were ineffective, 16 patients (80%) were dissatisfied and only 4 (20%) were satisfied. Conversely, when therapeutic communication was effective, 9 patients (90%) were satisfied and 1 patient (10%) was dissatisfied. The Chi-Square test yielded a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), demonstrating a significant relationship between nurse therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction.

However, this study contrasts with Rusmianingsih et al. (2022), which found no significant relationship between nurse therapeutic communication and respondent characteristics with inpatient satisfaction at Darma Community Health Center, Kuningan. Therefore, specialized training for nurses in therapeutic communication is recommended, along with other training programs to enhance patient satisfaction. Similarly, Andriani & Ningsih (2014) examined the relationship between nurse therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction in the surgical inpatient ward at RSI Ibnu Sina, Bukittinggi. Among 13 respondents, 35.2% reported poor nurse therapeutic communication, including inappropriate language use, failure to conduct patient orientation or

condition checks, lack of self-introduction, high tone of voice, unclear or lengthy explanations, frequent use of medical jargon, and lack of clarity in information provided to patients and families. Factors influencing therapeutic communication include education, work experience, knowledge, attitude, psychological condition, and message clarity, all of which significantly affect communication effectiveness. Conversely, poor therapeutic communication was associated with 11 dissatisfied respondents (64.7%), primarily due to nurses' slow response in providing care, unfriendly attitudes, and insufficient knowledge of therapeutic communication.

CONCLUSION

There is a significant relationship between therapeutic communication and patient satisfaction among Diabetes Mellitus patients at Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh, with a p-value of 0.013. Diabetes Mellitus patients expressed satisfaction with the nursing care provided by healthcare professionals.

Recommendation

Nurses are encouraged to consistently apply therapeutic communication in carrying out their roles as nursing care providers to foster a strong therapeutic relationship with patients.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the Director of Poltekkes Kemenkes Aceh, the Chair of PPM Poltekkes Kemenkes Aceh, the Head of Banda Raya Community Health Center, Banda Aceh, and all respondents who actively participated and supported the implementation of this research.

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