



Nursing Service Quality and Outpatient Satisfaction at Community Health Centers: A Cross-Sectional Study in Pekalongan

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ABSTRACT

Objective

To analyze the quality of nursing services and its relationship with outpatient satisfaction at the Community Health Center (Puskesmas).

Methods

This study employed a descriptive-correlative design with a cross-sectional approach. Data were collected using a quota sampling technique. The sample consisted of 96 outpatients at the general clinic of Puskesmas X, Pekalongan City. The research instruments included a nursing service quality questionnaire and a patient satisfaction questionnaire. Data were analyzed using the Chi-Square test.

Results

The findings indicated that 55.21% of respondents perceived the quality of nursing services as good, and 54.17% reported being satisfied with the services. The analysis yielded a p-value of 0.001 ($p < 0.05$), signifying a significant correlation between the quality of nursing services and outpatient satisfaction. Respondents who received nursing care were 9.9 times more likely to be satisfied with the nursing care provided at community health center outpatient clinics.

Conclusion

There is a significant relationship between the quality of nursing services and outpatient satisfaction at the public health center. Consequently, policies and rigorous monitoring-evaluation of the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for nursing care are essential.



Background

The quality of healthcare at healthcare facilities depends on the care provided by healthcare workers, including nurses (Nasirin & Asrina, 2020). Nurses are members of the healthcare workforce who frequently interact with patients by providing direct care at healthcare facilities (Nasirin & Asrina, 2020). High-quality nursing care is reflected in professional attitudes and actions, such as making patients feel comfortable and safe during nursing care (Fransisca, Basit, & Rachman, 2016). High-quality nursing care serves as an indicator that nurses are capable of providing good and satisfactory nursing care in accordance with established standards and procedures (Aulia *et al.*, 2023).

Evaluation of nursing care quality is described in previous research, which indicates that, on average, patients perceive nursing care as adequate in terms of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, concern, and appearance (Tyneke, Harold, & Kairupan, 2023). A total of 87% of respondents stated that the quality of nursing care was adequate, while the rest said it was inadequate (Tyneke, Harold, & Kairupan, 2023). This indicates that the minimum service standard for patient satisfaction is below 95%, which means that nursing care still does not meet the minimum standard or is of poor quality (Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia, 2016). Further research has shown that 54.5% of patients are dissatisfied with health services at community health centers, 59.1% report poor service procedures, and 59.1% cite inadequate facilities (Ulva & Azka, 2024).

The result of effective nursing care is patient satisfaction. Satisfied patients will feel that their expectations regarding care, their care needs, and the care they receive from nurses are well aligned (Kusumo, Rahayu, & Desty, 2023). Patients are comfortable and happy when using health care services as a result of good nursing care (Raising, 2019). Conversely, patients may experience discomfort and file more complaints about healthcare services when they do not receive quality nursing care. As a result, patients lose trust in the healthcare system and may seek care elsewhere (Duwith & Gurning, 2024; Novalia, Eliawati, & Wardhani, 2023).

Satisfaction with nursing care refers to patients' emotional response to nursing care providers (Ahmad & Napitupulu, 2021). According to a survey conducted by the Pekalongan City government in 2021, the Public Satisfaction Index (PSI) reached 80.38, which falls into the good category. That figure decreased to 80.33 in 2022 (Dinas Kesehatan Kota Pekalongan, 2023). Even though the decline was small, preliminary study results by researchers indicate that patients complained about nursing care that did not meet their expectations, including the provision of health information, the speed of service, and excessive waiting times.

One of the local health care facilities is the community health center. Community health centers are expected to meet the community's needs in maintaining and improving their health by providing effective health services (Wida & Ida, 2023). Decreased in community satisfaction at community health centers is attributed to communication issues, time constraints, service quality, and costs (Dinas Kesehatan Kota Pekalongan, 2023). The high cost of healthcare, the lack of adequate facilities, long wait times for care, and poor nursing performance are aspects of nursing care that are frequently the subject of complaints (Sukarno, Yoshida, & Kridawati, 2025). Dissatisfaction with the services provided can erode patient trust, reduce loyalty, and affect the image and reputation of healthcare institutions (Agung, Kurniawan, & Juru, 2022). Patient dissatisfaction with nursing care has the potential to spread and influence other prospective patients through negative word of mouth (Layne *et al.*, 2024). The lack of quality care drives patients to seek treatment at other healthcare facilities that are considered better (Nursalam, Pratiwi, & Hidayati,

2013). Community health centers may suffer financial losses and face difficulties in rebuilding patient trust if they are unable to maintain patient satisfaction with nursing care (Nur'aini, 2019).

Previous research has shown that healthcare services have a significant correlation with patient satisfaction (Ulfah & Wiayanti, 2020). The more improved the health care provided by health care workers, the higher the level of satisfaction felt by patients (Ulfah & Widayanti, 2020). Other studies indicate that outpatient care at community health centers is also linked to patient satisfaction (Akhiari, Azkha, & Alkafi, 2025). The quality of care has a positive impact and significantly influences patient satisfaction (Budiman, Rizaldy, & Sugianor, 2024; Manzoor *et al.*, 2019). Other studies indicate that the quality of health care and nursing services that enhance satisfaction consists of responsiveness, assurance, tangible evidence, empathy, and reliability (Mahmud, 2022). The quality of healthcare services that influences patient satisfaction is also mediated by patients' trust in the healthcare services themselves (Al-hilou & Suifan, 2023).

The study conducted on patients utilizing outpatient nursing services is important because community health centers (Puskesmas) serve as primary healthcare facilities where outpatients go to have their health conditions checked. In addition to the low and affordable cost of examinations at community health centers, these facilities also provide healthcare services to patients who require specialist care. The public should utilize outpatient services at community health centers before seeking specialist care at the hospital level. Thus, this research is important because it determines the sustainability of the first-level healthcare service flow at community health centers, both for those with health insurance and for patients seeking affordable, high-quality healthcare. The focus of previous research has largely been on the quality of health care services and patient satisfaction. The lack of more specific research on the quality of nursing care has prompted the researchers to conduct a study analyzing the relationship between the quality of nursing care and the satisfaction of outpatients at community health centers.

Methods

This study employs a descriptive correlational design using a cross-sectional approach. This study involves two main variables: the independent variable, which is the quality of nursing care, and the dependent variable, which is the level of patient satisfaction in the outpatient department. Nursing care is defined as the extent to which the care provided by nurses meets patients' expectations regarding health care. Nursing care is categorized as being of good or poor quality. Patient satisfaction is defined as a patient's feelings of either happiness or disappointment resulting from the nursing care received from a nurse, as compared to their expectations. Patient satisfaction is categorized as satisfied and less than satisfied.

The sample for this study consisted of patients who came for an examination at the outpatient unit of a community health center in the City of Pekalongan. The total number of patients from January through November 2024 was 10,519, with an average of 956 patients per month. The sample consisted of 96 respondents selected using quota sampling. The quota is set at 10% of the number of patients who visit in a month.

The sample was selected based on the following criteria: patients who visited the general outpatient clinic at the community health center, patients aged 15–60, and patients who agreed to participate in the study. The respondents ages were then grouped into three categories with equal intervals of 15 years, representing young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults. Data collection was conducted over a one-week period in January–February 2025.

The research instrument used a nursing care quality questionnaire developed by Budiman, Mardijanto, & Astutik (2021), which was modified by researchers based on national nursing care. This questionnaire covers five main dimensions: attention, acceptance, cooperation, communication,

and responsibility. The questionnaire consists of 15 questions covering the following aspects: attention (2 questions, nos. 1–2), acceptance (3 questions, nos. 3–5), communication (3 questions, nos. 6–8), cooperation (2 questions, nos. 9–10), and responsibility (5 questions, nos. 11–15). Respondents answered the questionnaire using a 5-point scale: 4 = strongly agree, 3 = agree, 2 = disagree, 1 = strongly disagree for favorable questions. Unfavorable questions had the following response options: strongly agree = 1, agree = 2, disagree = 3, strongly disagree = 4. The total score range for service quality is 15–60, and based on the data, the median score is 50. The median is used as the cutoff point that divides the quality of nursing care into two categories. The median was chosen because the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality indicated that the data on the quality of nursing care were not normally distributed. The median divided the data into two equal groups and ensured that both groups had the same sample size (Tustumi, 2022). The quality of nursing care is considered good if the score is ≥ 50 and poor if the score is < 50 . The results of the validity and reliability tests conducted by Budiman, Mardijanto, & Astutik (2021) indicated that all items were found to be valid, with scores ranging from 0.257 to 0.831 (tabulated $r = 0.202$) and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.856 (> 0.60). For the purpose of the current study, the validity and reliability of the instrument were tested again at community health centers other than the study site in the City of Pekalongan by researchers. The validity test resulted in r values ranging from 0.439 to 0.834. The reliability test indicated that it is reliable, with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.933, which is greater than 0.6.

The patient satisfaction survey developed by the researchers covers five key dimensions: reliability, assurance, tangible evidence, empathy, and responsiveness (Mohammed *et al.*, 2024; Yusefi *et al.*, 2022). The questionnaire consists of 15 questions with the following response options: 4 = Very Satisfied, 3 = Satisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, and 1 = Very Dissatisfied. The total score range for patient satisfaction is 15–60, and based on the data, the median score is 50. The median is used as the cutoff point that divides the patient satisfaction into two categories. The median was chosen because the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality indicated that the data on the patient satisfaction were not normally distributed. The median divided the data into two equal groups and ensured that both groups have the same sample size (Tustumi, 2022). Patient satisfaction is classified as satisfied if the score is ≥ 50 and as less than satisfied if the score is < 50 . The validity test by researchers yielded calculated r scores ranging from 0.515 to 0.932, and the reliability test yielded a score of 0.962, which is greater than 0.6. The results of the validity and reliability tests conducted by the researcher prior to data collection showed that all questionnaire items were deemed valid, with scores ranging from 0.207 to 0.762 (table $r = 0.202$) and a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.734 (> 0.60).

The questionnaire was completed in a single 20-minute session with the assistance of a researcher. The researchers conducted the study by stationing themselves at community health centers, specifically in the general health examination outpatient units. The researchers screened outpatient patients who arrived during the study period against the study's inclusion criteria. Patients who met the inclusion criteria were identified as potential participants until they received information about the study and consented to participate. Patients who agreed to become respondents were given a research questionnaire. The researchers stopped recruiting respondents once the sample size reached the established quota. The statistical test conducted by the researchers was a chi-square test, with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

This study has been approved by the Ethics Committee of Universitas Muhammadiyah Pekajangan Pekalongan, as evidenced by letter number 016/KEP-UMPP/I/2025. Informed consent is obtained in accordance with ethical protocols; for patients under the age of 18, it is provided by the patient's parent or guardian who is responsible for the patient. The researchers obtained consent

after providing an explanation appropriate to the respondents' age and level of understanding regarding the study's objectives, procedures, benefits, risks, and the respondents' right to refuse. Written consent was also obtained from the respondents' parents or guardians before the study was conducted.

Results

A total of 96 respondents participated in this study, comprising 58 female respondents and 38 male respondents. Table 1 shows that the largest age group is in the 15–30 age range. The most common level of education was high school or equivalent, with 38 respondents having graduated from high school or its equivalent. A total of 55.21% of respondents felt that the quality of nursing care at community health centers was good. A total of 54.17% were satisfied with the nursing care provided. Analysis of the questionnaire items revealed that patients perceived nursing care as good in terms of receptiveness, cooperation, and communication. Patients feel satisfied with the nursing care they receive based on the aspects of empathy, reliability, and assurance. Further details are provided in Table 2. The results of the bivariate analysis using the chi-square test showed a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), leading to the rejection of H_0 (Table 3). This indicates a significant association between the quality of nursing care and outpatient satisfaction at the Pekalongan City Community Health Center, with an odds ratio (OR) of 9.939. There is no r value in the analysis conducted.

Table 1. Overview of Characteristics, Nursing Services, and Satisfaction Among Outpatients at the Pekalongan City Community Health Center

	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age	15-30	37	38.54%
	31-45	34	35.42%
	46-60	25	26.04%
Gender	Male	38	39.58%
	Female	58	60.42%
Education	No school	2	2.08%
	Elementary School	23	24.96%
	Junior High School	22	22.92%
	High School	38	39.58%
	Bachelor's Degree	11	11.46%
Employment	Unemployed	4	4.17%
	Self-employed	11	11.46%
	Farmer	1	1.04%
	Housewife	33	34.38%
	Civil Servants/Military/Police	3	3.13%
	Miscellaneous	44	45.83%
Quality of Nursing Care	Good	53	55.21%
	Poor	43	44.79%
Patient Satisfaction	Satisfied	52	54.17%
	Less than satisfied	44	45.83%
Total		96	100%

Table 2. Analysis of Questionnaire Results

Variable	Dimension	Average Score (%)	A great item
Quality of Nursing Care	Attention	80.34	The nurse responds to the patient's complaints
	Receptiveness	87.41	The nurse greets the patient, smiles, and dresses neatly
	Communication	81.60	The nurse is open to the patient's complaints
	Cooperation	84.11	Nurses perform their assigned duties
	Responsibility	79.06	The nurse treated the patient well when they returned
Patient Satisfaction	Reliability	83.27	The patient is satisfied because it meets their expectations
	Assurance	82.68	The nurses are polite, friendly, and always smiling while providing care
	Tangibles	79.30	Use of appropriate equipment
	Empathy	84.03	A caring and patient nurse when providing care
	Responsiveness	80.99	The nurse assists until the patient receives their medication

Table 3. Relationship among the Quality of Nursing Care and Outpatient Satisfaction at the Pekalongan City Community Health Center

Quality of Nursing Care	Patient Satisfaction				Total	%	P value	OR	CI 95%
	Satisfied	%	Less than satisfied	%					
Good	41	42.71%	12	12.50%	53	5.21 %	0.001	9.939	3.884–25.438
Poor	11	11.46%	32	33.33%	43	44.79 %			
Total	52	54.17%	44	45.83%	96	100 %			

Discussion

This study shows that there is a significant relationship between the quality of nursing care and the patient's satisfaction at outpatients at the Pekalongan City Community Health Center. This relationship is due to the fact that patients' expectations regarding the nursing care provided by nurses have been met. Previous research has shown that when patients' expectations regarding the services they receive are met and align with their needs, they feel satisfied, which in turn improves the quality of care at a healthcare facility (Islamy & Sulima, 2020).

Analysis of the questionnaire items revealed that patients perceived nursing care as good in terms of receptiveness, cooperation, and communication. Patients feel that the nurses perform their duties well, which includes smiling, greeting patients, and maintaining a neat appearance while providing nursing care. In addition, nurses also provide encouragement to patients and deliver nursing care tailored to their needs. Patients perceive this sense of responsibility through the nurses' readiness to perform nursing interventions and respond to patients appropriately. However, other aspects of nursing care must also be improved in order to enhance the quality of nursing services; for example, nurses should provide information on how to perform self-care at home and the benefits of doing so. Patient satisfaction with nursing care was also rated as good, as patients felt that the nursing care provided met their expectations. The nurses have also provided nursing

care in a friendly and polite manner, always with a smile. In addition, the nurses have also shown empathy toward patients by paying close attention to them and listening patiently to their concerns.

Outpatients' satisfaction with healthcare services depends on the quality of nursing care they receive (Purnawan, Zaman, & Ekawati, 2024). In addition to ensuring comfort, good service builds public trust in healthcare workers, which is key to improving patient satisfaction (Manno, Linno, & Long, 2025). There is a positive correlation between the quality of care provided and patient response (Irianto, Hartati, & Soenarmi, 2020). The more optimal the nursing care received, the higher the level of satisfaction felt by the patient (Amini, Jum'ah, Azhari, 2025). The finding of the current study is in line with the findings of a previous study conducted by Ulfah & Widayati (2020), which show that improvements in the quality of outpatient care significantly contribute to patient satisfaction, as observed at the Sidorejo Kidul Community Health Center.

Community health centers have an important role to play in ensuring the satisfaction of the community as recipients of health and nursing services, while also serving as a key instrument in efforts to comprehensively improve public health (Hasrillah, 2021). High-quality healthcare not only strengthens the relationship between healthcare providers and patients, but also encourages patients to return for future care. In addition, high quality fosters the creation of a referral system based on word-of-mouth recommendations, which is more cost-effective (Irianto, Hartati, & Soenarmi, 2020).

High-quality nursing care is demonstrated by a nurse's ability to establish communication with patients (Wardhani & Muharni, 2025). Effective communication is a fundamental skill for nurses providing nursing care in healthcare settings (Attamimi, Lestari, & Rinenggantyas, 2024). Previous research indicates that patient dissatisfaction with nursing care stems from three main factors: ineffective communication, long wait times, and a level of professionalism among nurses that falls short of patients' expectations (Ren *et al.*, 2021). Effective communication between nurses and patients can improve patient satisfaction (Tamara, Utami, & Aini, 2021). The quality of nursing care can be improved by focusing on five key aspects: attentiveness, acceptance, communication, cooperation, and responsibility (Rusnoto, Purnomo, & Utomo, 2019). In the context of nursing care at community health centers, addressing these five aspects can be a key factor in improving patient satisfaction. The more nurses are able to provide the highest level of care by focusing on compassion, acceptance, communication, teamwork, and responsibility, the more patient satisfaction will increase significantly.

The limitations of this study are that it was conducted at only one community health center, the data analysis was limited to bivariate analysis, and confounding variables were not included in the analysis. In addition, the research process requires a more attentive approach to ensure that patients remain well throughout their participation in the study, given that they are currently ill. Nevertheless, the study proceeded smoothly and in accordance with research ethics.

Conclusion

The findings of this study indicate a significant association between the quality of nursing care and patient satisfaction levels in the outpatient unit at the community health center. This confirms that any improvement in the quality of nursing care will be followed by a corresponding increase in patient satisfaction. Respondents who received nursing care were 9.9 times more likely to be satisfied with the nursing care provided at community health center outpatient clinics. The quality of nursing care plays a crucial role in determining patient satisfaction, particularly in outpatient services at healthcare facilities such as community health centers. Optimal service quality is important in improving comfort, building trust in medical staff, and ensuring patient satisfaction. Based on this urgency, health center management needs to establish strategic policies and conduct regular monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for nursing services.

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