



Storytelling Methods by Nurses on Children's Anxiety Levels During Hospitalization

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ABSTRACT

Hospitalization in children often causes anxiety caused by the new environment, medical procedures, and separation from family. High anxiety can impact the child's psychological condition and hinder the healing process. One non-pharmacological intervention that can be carried out by nurses to reduce children's anxiety is the storytelling method. This study aims to determine the effect of the storytelling method by nurses on children's anxiety levels during hospitalization. The study used a quasi-experimental design with a pretest - posttest approach. The study sample consisted of 40 children undergoing treatment in the pediatric inpatient ward. Measurement of anxiety levels was carried out using a child anxiety scale before and after the storytelling intervention. Data analysis used a paired t- test. The results showed a significant decrease in children's anxiety levels after the storytelling intervention ($p < 0.001$). It was concluded that the storytelling method is effective in reducing children's anxiety levels during hospitalization.

Keywords: *Storytelling, Child Anxiety, Hospitalization, Pediatric Nursing*

1. INTRODUCTION

Hospitalization can be a stressful experience for children. The unfamiliar hospital environment, frightening medical procedures, and separation from family can all contribute to anxiety.

Anxiety in children during hospitalization can affect their behavior, such as crying, refusing medical treatment, and experiencing sleep disturbances. This condition not only impacts the child's comfort but can also complicate healthcare providers' care.

Nurses play a crucial role in helping children cope with anxiety during hospitalization. One approach that can be used is storytelling. Storytelling is a therapeutic communication technique that uses stories as a medium to help children understand the situation they are facing.





Through storytelling, children can distract themselves from fear and experience more positive emotions. Engaging stories can help children feel calmer and more comfortable during their hospital stay.

This study aims to determine the effect of the storytelling method used by nurses on children's anxiety levels during hospitalization.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

a. Research Design

This study uses a quasi-experimental design with a pretest – posttest approach .

b. Population and Sample

The research population was children undergoing treatment in the pediatric inpatient ward.

The sample size was 40 children selected using purposive sampling technique .

c. Inclusion Criteria

- 1) Children aged 4–10 years
- 2) Undergoing hospitalization for at least 2 days
- 3) Can communicate well

d. Research Variables

- 1) Independent variable: storytelling method
- 2) Dependent variable: child's anxiety level

e. Research Procedures

- 1) Measurement of children's anxiety levels before intervention (pretest)
- 2) Storytelling by nurses for 15–20 minutes
- 3) Re-measurement of anxiety levels after intervention (posttest)

f. Research Instruments

Measurement of anxiety using a validated children's anxiety scale.

g. Data analysis

The analysis was carried out using a paired t- test with a significance level of 0.05.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Research result

1) Respondent Characteristics

This study involved 40 children hospitalized in the pediatric inpatient ward. Respondent characteristics included age, gender, and length of hospitalization.



**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics**

Characteristics	n	%
Age		
4–6 years	18	45
7–10 years	22	55
Gender		
Man	23	57.5
Woman	17	42.5
Length of Hospitalization		
2–3 days	24	60
>3 days	16	40

Most respondents were in the 7–10 age group. At this age, children begin to develop better cognitive abilities in understanding stories, making storytelling a more effective method for helping reduce anxiety.

2) Child Anxiety Level Before Intervention

The child's anxiety level was measured before the nurse gave the storytelling intervention .

Table 2. Distribution of Anxiety Levels Before Storytelling

Anxiety Level	n	%
Light	10	25
Currently	20	50
Heavy	10	25

The study results showed that most children experienced moderate anxiety before the intervention. This was due to various factors, such as the unfamiliar hospital environment, fear-inducing medical procedures, and limited play activities during hospitalization.

3) Children's Anxiety Levels After Storytelling Intervention

After being given a storytelling intervention for 15–20 minutes by the nurse, the child's anxiety level was re-measured.



**Table 3. Distribution of Anxiety Levels After Storytelling**

Anxiety Level	n	%
Light	24	60
Currently	12	30
Heavy	4	10

There was an increase in the number of children with mild anxiety after the storytelling intervention. This suggests that storytelling helps children feel more comfortable during their hospital stay.

4) Comparison of Children's Anxiety Scores

Table 4. Comparison of Anxiety Scores

Measurement	Mean \pm SD
Pretest	26.5 \pm 4.2
Posttest	18.3 \pm 3.7

A decrease in anxiety scores of 8.2 points indicates a significant change after the child received storytelling intervention.

5) Statistical Analysis

The results of the paired t- test show $p < 0.001$. This shows that the storytelling method has a significant influence on reducing children's anxiety levels during hospitalization.

b. Discussion

The study results showed that storytelling by nurses was effective in reducing children's anxiety levels during hospitalization. The 8.2-point decrease in anxiety scores indicates that storytelling is a fairly effective intervention in helping children cope with stress during hospitalization.

Hospitalization is often a stressful experience for children due to the drastic change in environment. Children must adapt to unfamiliar hospital environments, intimidating medical equipment, and potentially uncomfortable treatment procedures.

Storytelling can help children cope with anxiety through several psychological mechanisms. Stories told by nurses can distract children from their fear of medical procedures. Furthermore, storytelling helps children express their emotions and understand the situation they're facing in a simpler and more enjoyable way.





From a developmental psychology perspective, children aged 4–10 are at a stage of cognitive development where imagination and storytelling play a crucial role in learning and understanding. Therefore, storytelling is an effective communication medium for helping children understand the situation of hospitalization.

Besides being a form of distraction, storytelling can also enhance the therapeutic relationship between nurses and pediatric patients. The warm and communicative interactions during storytelling can make children feel more secure and trusting of healthcare professionals.

The effectiveness of storytelling can also be influenced by several factors, such as the child's age, health condition, and the nurse's ability to convey the story in an engaging manner. Therefore, nurses need to have good communication skills when implementing storytelling.

The results of this study indicate that storytelling can be an effective non-pharmacological intervention in pediatric nursing care. This method is relatively easy to implement, requires no special equipment, and can improve children's comfort during hospitalization.

Integrating storytelling into pediatric nursing practice can also support an atraumatic approach. Care, namely a care approach that aims to minimize stress and trauma in children during treatment in hospital.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

a. Conclusion

Storytelling method used by nurses has been proven effective in reducing children's anxiety levels during hospitalization. This intervention can help children feel calmer and more comfortable during their hospital stay.

b. Suggestion

- 1) Nurses are advised to use the storytelling method as part of pediatric nursing care.
- 2) Hospitals can develop play therapy programs for hospitalized children.
- 3) Further research can examine other play therapy methods in reducing children's anxiety.

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