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TIME SUBMITTED	29-MAY-2020 07:44PM (UTC+0700)	WORD COUNT	3229
SUBMISSION ID	1334123536	CHARACTER COUNT	17937



## Patient experiences of nurse caring behaviors based on Swanson's theory in Indonesian hospital<sup>☆</sup>



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Received 29 May 2019; accepted 15 July 2019

### KEYWORDS

Nurse caring behavior;  
Patients' experiences;  
Swanson's caring theory

### Abstract

**Objective:** To explore patient experiences of nurse caring behaviors according to Swanson's theory in Indonesian hospital.

**Method:** This study design was qualitative with phenomenology approach. Ten participants who were admitted to four inpatient wards were interviewed using semi-structured technique.

**Results:** Five themes emerged from this study: nurse–patient relationship, lack of psychological care, knowing the patients' need, safety performance, and hoping for better nursing services. **Conclusions:** Patients were dissatisfied with the fulfillment of the maintaining belief dimension, especially for the lack of communication between nurses and their patients to foster trust relationships. Hence, this study suggests nurses improve their therapeutic communication to their patients while performing nursing interventions.

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## 4 Introduction

Nurses, one of the crucial and influential members of the healthcare teams, have a critical role in patient care.<sup>1</sup> Nursing care is provided in the form of a comprehensive

service, including physical, psychological, social, and knowledge provided to patients.<sup>2</sup> Nursing is a caring profession that requires the provision of excellent care within an ethical, reflective and knowing framework.<sup>3</sup> A caring attitude is vital in the nursing profession to ensure the development of trust in the nurse–patient relationship.<sup>3</sup>

Knowledge, attitude, and skills of nurses are the basis of nurse caring behaviors and the essential factors in evaluating the quality of nursing care behaviors. Caring of nurses has been studied and reported beneficial for both patients and nurses.<sup>4</sup> However, several studies reported that nurse had not been implemented caring behavior properly. One study conducted in hospitals across the country showed that 35.1%

<sup>☆</sup> Peer-review under responsibility of the scientific committee of the International Conference on Women and Societal Perspective on Quality of Life (WOSQUAL-2019). Full-text and the content of it is under responsibility of authors of the article.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.enfcli.2019.07.113>

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of nurses do not provide health information to patients.<sup>5</sup> Another study showed that patients' perceptions of caring are significantly diminished by lack of confidence of nurses and by missed nursing care.<sup>6</sup>

Caring is the fundamental structure of many nursing theories.<sup>7</sup> Caring behavior of nurses according to Swanson can be seen from the fifth dimension of caring that is maintaining belief (maintaining confidence in the incident or the transition and see it full of wisdom), knowing (trying hard to understand the significance of events in the lives of others), being with (indicating feelings of empathy to others), doing for (working/doing something for others as for themselves) and enabling (facilitating others on the transition state).<sup>8</sup>

Several studies have shown that patient perceptions of caring related to staff nurse perceptions, especially from different cultural backgrounds,<sup>9,10</sup> give different interpretations of caring concepts.<sup>9,10</sup> Indonesia is a vast country with approximately 250 million people with sizeable different ethnic and culture.<sup>11</sup> Thus, this is important for nurses to implement caring behavior and improve patient satisfaction during patient hospitalization. As nurse caring behaviors would be well studied using qualitative approaches, it is recommended<sup>19</sup> to use qualitative methods to measure differences in patients' perceptions of care and caring behaviors.<sup>12</sup> Thus, this study aimed was to explore patient experiences of nurse caring behaviors according to Swanson's theory in Indonesian hospital.

## Method

### Design and procedure

A qualitative design with descriptive phenomenology was adopted to explore patient experiences of nurse caring behaviors according to Swanson's theory in Indonesian hospital. An in-depth<sup>7</sup> interview with semi-structured questions was used in this study. All interviews conducted by the first author and patients were<sup>2</sup> interviewed individually in Indonesian. The interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Initial data analysis was undertaken in Indonesian and translated into English.

### Participants and setting

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling from a large hospital in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Participants have hospitalized patients meeting the inclusion criteria: patients aged ranging from 18 to 45 years old, patients on second day of care, patients were conscious, able to communicate and willing to participate.

This study involved ten patients who were hospitalized in different hospital wards, aged ranging from 26 to 44 years old. Four participants were males, and six participants were women. All of the participants were graduated from high school and master's degree.

## 2 Data analysis

Thematic analysis was used to analyze data. Each interview was verbatim transcribed,<sup>2</sup> read, and re-read to the entire

meaning of the data. We coded each data that was relevant to the research aims. Then comes with a similar meaning were grouped and examined for each meaning unit. The same meaning unit was grouped into sub-themes and clustered into themes. If there were different interpretation in process data analysis, the team discussed until agreement was achieved.<sup>13</sup>

The rigor of this study was reached with ongoing discussions between authors during analysis to achieve agreement. Coding, sub-themes, and themes were cross-checked and compared during the data analysis. Initial data analysis using original data was conducted in Indonesian to enhance the rigor of the study.

## Ethical considerations

This study received ethics review and approval from the University's institutional review board in Indonesia. During inpatient stays, nurses approached patients to obtain their willingness to participate. The patient who agreed was then contacted by the first author to set the interview following the wishes of the participants.

## Results

Five themes of patient experiences emerged from this study to describe the phenomenon of nurse caring behaviors based on Swanson's Theory. These five themes were: (1) Nurse-patient relationship, (2) Lack of psychological care, (3) Knowing the patients' need, (4) Safety performance, (5) Hoping for better nursing services. Themes and sub-themes from this result are shown in Table 1.

### Nurse-patient relationship

This first theme was the most expressed by participants. The theme, a nurse-patient relationship was described by participants based on what they experienced with nurses' communication skills, caring behavior, and nurses' competences. The results of this study indicated that most participants revealed that nurses performed nursing interventions without decent communication skills. They confirmed that nurses rarely introduced themselves during handover and they showed poor communication with patients.

"... the nurse did not introduce herself, she just did her tasks and then left, she smiled, but never said something related to her name or procedure that she did to me (patient)" (P10).

Caring patients is an essential nurse behavior. This study showed that three participants reported that nurses were humble and cared to patients based on their needs.

"Good, the nurse was paying attention because that is what I feel... When I had just got the surgery, I felt discomfort. So, the nurse came here and said, "Mam, you should move to another room because you need to take a rest after having surgery." I then moved to another room. After moving to a new room, I rested comfortably. Nurses also paid

**Table 1** Themes and sub-themes.

Themes	Sub-themes
Nurse–patient relationship	Communication skills Care to patients Lack of trust in nurses' competences
Lack of psychological care	Focus on physical care Lack of empathy
Knowing the patients' need	Responsive to complaints presented by patients Appropriate nursing care
Safety performance	Control for patients' condition Patients' privacy Lack of pre- and post-operative education Lack of explanation for patient care procedures
Hoping for better nursing services	Improvement of nursing services Improvement of facilities services

attention to other patients as the needs of those patients were different" (P6)

However, five participants reported that they did not trust nurses' competences. Participants claimed that sometimes nurses were lack of knowledge about patient condition.

"Hmm... nurses were lack of knowledge about patients' condition; she should explain the condition of my hands and forbid me to move my hands too much. This is actually [17] explanation that I want to hear from the nurse, but it didn't happen, although I asked them, they didn't know" (P1).

#### Lack of psychological care

Patient experiences on nurse caring behavior, especially psychological care was still lacking. In this study, nurses only focused on physical care and they were less empathy as expressed by seven participants below.

"In terms of psychological support, it still lacks because nurses tend to focus on procedural care..." (P1)

The results of the study showed that six participants assumed that nurses were less empathy with patients as mentioned by one of the participants when this participant had trouble with the IV line.

"...I was worried as I saw that there was blood in my IV line, but the nurse only said that it was okay unless it was blocked. For me, the nurse did not care about my worry." (P4)

#### Knowing the patients' need

The result of this study revealed that the majority of participants agreed that nurses had quick responses to their needs or complaints.

"The nurses behaved well, and I saw all of them responded quickly, for example if patients had trouble with IV line or if they called them to check my condition" (P4)

Several participants expressed that nurses provided nursing care based on patients needs. "In my experiences, the nurse comes when they want to check my blood pressure or give an injection" (P7).

#### Safety performance

This study revealed that there were positive and negative safety performances, including nurses controlled for patients' condition and privacy, but nurses showed inadequate pre- and post-educative education and explanation of patient care procedures.

The study result indicated that the majority of participants confirmed that nurses visited participants' rooms three times a day.

"Nurses came to my room three times a day to check my blood pressure and the IV line. If there were a complaint, they would address it" (P1).

Another safety performance that implemented by nurses in this study was to keep patients' privacy. Five participants expressed that nurses protected their privacy when they were examined.

"Nurses keep patients' privacy, for example, when providing nursing interventions, nurses cover the patients' exposed body with a blanket" (P3).

Some nurses conducted safety performances, but others did not perform it. The results of this study indicated that there were four participants revealed that nurses did not deliver pre-operative education, but they only informed the time for surgery.

"The nurse did not provide me with information before surgery. It was just me the one that asked about my condition...even the nurses were late to transfer me to the surgical ward..." (P1).

This study demonstrated that the majority of nurses did not give an explanation about the nursing care goals that they were performed to patients. Nurses provided direct nursing care without informed them about the procedure aims.

"The nurses did not explain the procedure to patients, maybe because they think the patients know better, but actually nurses should say, "You have to do this, Sir!". That is how it should be, and they must be validated" (P3).

### Hoping for better nursing services

The results showed that nine participants felt stress and stated that it was necessary for nurses to have excellent communication with patients. They were assumed that better nursing services if nurses have excellent communication with patients and their family.

"Well, at least the service is better than this again, it means they should be more careful to check patients' condition. The nursing service was essential when caring for patients. The second was nurses' smile, but the most important was their services. Whatever the patients' condition, it is better to give motivation to patients..." (P5).

The results of this study reported that one participant said that hospitals must be completed with good facilities.

"The first is the hospital facilities... I want to experience with better facilities than this" (P9).

### Discussion

Caring is the fundamental structure of many nursing theories.<sup>7</sup> This study was conducted to explore patient experiences of nurse caring behaviors according to Swanson's theory in Indonesian hospital. The study participants explained experiences of nurse caring behavior through five main themes of nurse-patient relationship, lack of psychological care, knowing the patients' need, safety performance, and hoping for better nursing services.

All patients taking part in this study mentioned nurses' communication skills as one of their significant experiences of patient-related nurse caring behaviors. This is supported by Swanson's caring theory, especially in maintaining belief dimension that foster trust relationship between patients and nurses to promote the healing process.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, spending even a short time in speaking with the patients decreases the negative consequences of lack of relationships, such as the patients' dissatisfaction, anxiety, and anger.<sup>1</sup> In the same line, Henderson et al. showed that nurse-patient trust relationship could be demonstrated through daily social interactions, such as 'getting to know you' and 'translating' that they 'cared for' patients.<sup>7</sup> Caring for patients is important as it is related to nurse caring behaviors. This study was shown several participants reported that nurses were humble and cared for patients. Other study explained that providing caring behaviors requires the ability to take care of patients that affects patients and family to feel good about the care provided and thus, convinces them to provide positive comments during the care process.<sup>15</sup> Nurses' competence was one of factors related nurse-patient relationship. Patients experienced caring when health care

providers combined technical competence and experiential knowledge.<sup>16</sup>

According to Swanson's caring theory, nurses must perform holistic assessment that includes biological, psychological, spiritual and cultural status of patients. The more frequent nurses explain about changes in patients' health conditions; families would gain a deeper understanding about patients' diseases and conditions.<sup>14</sup> In this study, negative patients' experiences were reported as lack of psychological care. Other researchers reported that psychological support should be embedded within cardiac rehabilitation programs, as patients welcomed cardiac nurses attending to both their physical and mental well-being, viewing this as providing a more holistic approach.<sup>17</sup> Likewise, one study has shown that a holistic approach to patient care would be necessary to provide appropriate psychosocial care.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the lack of nurse caring behaviors, the primary source of dissatisfaction was when patients perceived that nurses were not readily available to respond to specific requests.<sup>6</sup> However, the result of this study revealed that majority participants asserted that nurses have quickly responded to the patients' needs or complaints. Patients experienced caring when healthcare professionals ensured that clinical processes were efficient, prompt, reliable, holistic, and responsive to patients' needs.<sup>16</sup>

Another important finding of patients' experiences of nurse caring behaviors in this study was safety performance. This study confirmed that there was positive and negative safety performance conducted by nurses during patient hospitalization. Patients expected nurses to be responsible for them, especially in administering the treatment and performing the care, while also maintaining their privacy and rights.<sup>1</sup> Lack of information related to procedures received by patients was also revealed in this study. This result contrasts with Swanson's theory, which convinces that informing patients and families about patients' health conditions is one of caring aspects.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, patients suggested the improvement of nursing services and hospital facilities. It is essential that nurses should perform effective communication to improve nursing services. Therapeutic communication, punctuality, and caring environment are crucial in nursing care services.<sup>19</sup>

### Conclusion

We aimed to explore patient experiences of nurse caring behaviors according to Swanson's theory in Indonesian hospital. Patients were dissatisfied with the fulfillment of the maintaining belief dimension, especially for the lack of communication between nurses and their patients to foster trust relationships. Hence, this study suggests nurses to improve their therapeutic communication to their patients during performing nursing interventions.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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