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IMPLEMENTATION OF BIBLIOTHERAPY TO REDUCE ANXIETY IN HOSPITALIZED CHILDREN: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: The hospital environment can cause anxiety in children. This anxiety can lead to children refusing treatment, thereby prolonging their hospital stay. This study aims to identify the application of bibliotherapy in reducing anxiety in children undergoing hospitalization. **Method:** The method used in this study was a case study conducted in the Bougenvile Room at Dr. Haryoto Hospital, Lumajang. The study participants were children aged 6–12 years. The study was conducted from March 17–19, 2025. The tools used to measure anxiety levels were the Anxiety Level Observation Sheet (SLKI) and the Facial Expression Scale (FIS). Bibliotherapy was conducted using folklore books from the islands, with a duration of approximately 45 minutes per day over three days. **Results:** The results showed a decrease in anxiety levels from a score of 3 (moderate anxiety) to a score of 1 (no anxiety). Nursing objectives were also achieved, including a reduction in verbal expressions of confusion, a reduction in verbal expressions of worry, a reduction in restless behavior, a reduction in tense behavior, improved concentration, and improved sleep patterns. **Conclusion:** Bibliotherapy is a technique that can be applied to reduce anxiety in children undergoing inpatient care.

Keywords: Anxiety, Bibliotherapy, Hospitalization

Introduction

Children are individuals who still tend to depend on their environment (Oktiawati et al., 2023). A new environment can cause children to become easily stressed. When children are in the hospital, they may feel stressed because they are separated from their school and friends (Hayati et al., 2024). Common emotions experienced by children include anxiety, anger, sadness, fear, and guilt. One of the symptoms that children often

experience during hospitalization is anxiety (Butarbutar et al., 2024). If anxiety is not addressed immediately, children will respond by refusing treatment and prolonging their hospital stay (Rahmadani & Dwiana Maydinar, 2021).

The WHO (2023) states that 45% of all pediatric patients who have undergone treatment in hospitals. According to UNICEF (2023), every year, the prevalence of children requiring hospital care reaches 57 million, with 80%



of them experiencing trauma in the form of fear and anxiety during treatment (Putri et al., 2024). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2023, the percentage of sick children in Indonesia aged 5-17 years is 27.84%. School-aged children (6-12 years) in Indonesia are estimated to be 35 out of every 100 children undergoing hospitalization, and of the 75%, 45% of them experience anxiety (Purwati, 2023). According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health in East Java Province, 35.26 children aged 0-17 years old experienced health complaints (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2023). Medical records from Dr. Haryoto Lumajang Regional General Hospital show that 3,554 children were hospitalized at Dr. Haryoto Lumajang Regional General Hospital in 2024, with the latest data for January to March 2025 showing 561 children.

According to Munif dkk., (2023) School-aged children undergoing hospitalization may experience anxiety. There are several factors that cause children to experience anxiety, namely healthcare workers, new environments, and accompanying family members during their stay in the hospital (Rahmadani & Dwiana Maydinar, 2021). A child's negative experiences during hospitalization can also trigger anxiety. (Butarbutar et al., 2024) PPNI SDKI (2017) stating that symptoms such as fear, restlessness, and anxiety are included in the nursing diagnosis of anxiety.

According to SIKI, bibliotherapy is one of the treatments that can be given to children experiencing anxiety (PPNI, 2017). Bibliotherapy is included as an additional intervention for anxiety, with the intervention title Bibliotherapy

(I.09254). Bibliotherapy, or reading therapy, can have a calming effect, giving children the opportunity to express their anxiety both verbally and non-verbally (Munif et al., 2023). Based on research conducted by Widia dkk., (2022) mentions that bibliotherapy has an effect on anxiety levels. This study is unique in that it uses a different storybook each day for the three days of the study. This keeps children from getting bored while reading. In addition, the three-day duration of the study is tailored to the average length of time children spend in the hospital. Therefore, bibliotherapy can be a fun and useful alternative to help children reduce anxiety while undergoing treatment in the hospital. Based on this background, researchers are interested in discussing more about nursing anxiety in school-age children who experience hospitalization.

This study aims to examine bibliotherapy in reducing anxiety in children undergoing hospitalization.

Methods

The research subject was a patient admitted to the Bougenvile Ward of Dr. Haryoto Lumajang Regional General Hospital with a diagnosis of Dengue Hemorrhagic Fever (DHF), experiencing anxiety and meeting the main criteria for anxiety according to the Indonesian Nursing Diagnosis Standards (SDKI), including confusion, feeling afraid, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, tension, and difficulty sleeping. The patient also provided written consent to participate. Exclusion criteria included patients who could not read.



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The bibliotherapy intervention was conducted passively by nurses using traditional Indonesian folk tale books. The child read a different book each day. On the first day, the child read a story titled “Bawang merah bawang putih” on the second day, a story titled “Malin kundang,” and on the third day, a story titled “Timun emas” The child read the books for 45 minutes each day. Researchers assessed anxiety levels daily before and after each intervention using the Face Image Scale (FIS) over three days. At the end of the intervention, researchers evaluated children's anxiety levels using the Indonesian Nursing Care Outcomes Standards (SLKI) criteria, including confusion, worry, concentration level, restlessness, tension, and sleep quality.

Results

The participants in the study amounted to 1 respondent named child A who was 8 years old with female gender with a diagnosis of DHF. The guardian of child A is Mrs. A who is 36 years old. Mrs. A is the mother of child A and the closest person to the patient. Mrs. A said the patient had been admitted 3 times to the hospital. Mrs. A said her son experienced anxiety because he had a history of surgery at the age of 3 and 4 years. the operation was caused because the patient had a fracture in his right leg so that it required surgery at the age of 3 years and the removal of the pen at the age of 6 years. besides that the patient had also been hospitalized due to asthma at the age of 4 years. The patient said he felt afraid of staff such as nurses and other health workers because the patient was afraid of

injections. In addition, the patient also looks confused with the hospital environment, has difficulty concentrating, looks restless, looks tense and has difficulty sleeping. after measuring anxiety using FIS (Face Image Scale), the child's anxiety level is obtained on a scale of 3, namely moderate anxiety.

The implementation carried out on child A is bibliotherapy. On the first day, child A read a storybook entitled bawang merah bawang putih, on the second day read a storybook entitled malin kundang and the third day read a storybook entitled timun emas.

The results of the implementation on the first day have not decreased the level of anxiety based on the FIS scale (Face Image scale). This is because in this condition the child is still approaching the nurse, but here the nurse has approached the parents and made reading therapy more interesting by playing fishing games, where this fishing action is also in accordance with the contents of the reading book the child is reading. On the second day of implementation, it was found that there was a decrease in the child's anxiety level from a scale of 3 (moderate) to 2 (mild). On the third day, it was found that there was a decrease in the child's anxiety level from a scale of 2 (mild anxiety) to a scale of 1 (not anxious). the decrease in anxiety levels on day two and day three occurred because the child had begun to recognize and trust the nurse.

Table 1 Changes in anxiety scale based on FIS (Face Image Scale)

Da y	Pre Implementatio n	Post Implementation
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1	3	3
2	3	2
3	2	1

Based on table 1, it shows that the average anxiety level of children before bibliotherapy intervention is decreased from anxiety scale 3 (moderate anxiety) to scale 1 (not anxious).

Discussion

The patient named child A is 8 years old with female gender. Purwati (2023) school-age children (6-12 years) in Indonesia, an estimated 35 out of every 100 children undergo hospitalization, and of the 75%, 45% of them experience anxiety. Thus, the author argues that school-age children have the possibility of experiencing anxiety due to hospitalization of around 45%. The author argues that children aged 6-12 years are at risk of experiencing anxiety due to hospitalization.

Child A's mother's assessment said her child was anxious when at the hospital. Child A also said he was afraid of health workers because he was afraid of injections. While undergoing hospitalization, the patient seemed anxious and wanted to go home immediately. Respondents looked confused, restless, tense and had difficulty concentrating. PPNI (2017) symptoms and signs of major anxiety according to are feeling worried, feeling confused, having difficulty concentrating, looking restless, looking tense and having difficulty sleeping. The author argues that the signs and symptoms that occur in patients have fulfilled the diagnosis of anxiety with a percentage of 100% entering into major criteria.

Mrs. A said that her child had been treated once had a history of fracture trauma at the age of 3 years and removal of the pen at the age of 6 years, and had a history of hospitalization due to asthma, so the child felt afraid of health workers for fear of hurting him. The etiology of nursing problems in patients is a threat to self-concept. Butarbutar et al., (2024) A child's bad experience during hospitalization will cause trauma, trauma is influenced by many things including the inpatient environment, the attitude of health workers, and the length of treatment days. So the author argues that a bad experience while undergoing hospitalization will cause trauma for the child and the feeling of trauma can reappear when the child undergoes hospitalization again.

The implementation given to patients is bibliotherapy which refers to SIKI (PPNI, 2018) with number I.09254. Bibliotherapy implementation is carried out 1x a day for 3 days for \pm 45 minutes given in the afternoon. Bibliotherapy used by researchers is an archipelago folk story book with story titles, namely bawang merah bawang putih, malin kundang and timun emas. Researchers made an SOP (standard operational procedure) with an interesting storybook theme according to the age of the child. Researchers take an approach by playing fishing according to the contents of children's storybooks, besides that it also involves the role of parents of anti-rheumatic care for children. Made dkk., (2021) reading is a distraction that can reduce stressor hormones, activate natural endorphins, and distract from fear, anxiety and tension, improve the body's chemical system, lower blood pressure and



slow breathing, heart rate, pulse, and brain wave activity. Slow respiration creates calmness, emotional control, and a good metabolic system. Latuconsina dkk., (2022) books that are suitable for children aged 7-11 years are books that are narrative in nature and present simple stories that concern the conflicts told and how to solve the problem, for example folklore. When the child is 7-11 years old, the child's intellect has begun to develop and can understand logic. This can be seen from the characteristics of children who are able to make simple classifications such as distinguishing objects, colors, properties and characters. The author argues that folklore books are suitable for children who experience anxiety due to hospitalization by doing bibliotherapy.

In table 1, it can be seen that on the first day there was no decrease in anxiety levels based on the FIS scale (Face Image scale). This is because in this condition the child is still approaching the nurse, but here the nurse has approached the parents and made reading therapy more interesting by playing fishing games, where this fishing action is also in accordance with the contents of the reading book that the child is reading. On the second day of implementation, it was found that there was a decrease in the child's anxiety level from a scale of 3 (moderate) to 2 (mild). On the third day, it was found that there was a decrease in children's anxiety levels from scale 2 (mild anxiety) to scale 1 (no anxiety). The decrease in anxiety levels on day two and day three occurred because the child had begun to recognize and trust the nurse. Widia dkk (2022) bibliotherapy conducted for 3 days with \pm 45 minutes can reduce the level of anxiety. The Brain

Balance Center in Fadli (2023) states that children aged 8 years have a concentration range of around 16-24 minutes. Widia dkk (2022) mentioned that things that can be done to avoid boredom in children can do funny things or entertainment in order to increase the child's focus again. The author argues that to avoid boredom while children are undergoing therapy, namely by playing games that lead to the topic of reading books so as to reduce children's boredom during reading and can increase children's focus on the topic of reading books.

Conclusion Bibliotherapy can be a valuable nursing intervention for children undergoing hospitalization with anxiety. However, as a single case study, these findings cannot be generalized. Further quantitative studies with larger sample sizes are needed to validate these results.

Conclusion

The implementation of bibliotherapy for three consecutive days resulted in a decrease in anxiety levels from a score of 3 (moderate anxiety) to a score of 1 (no anxiety) in hospitalized children with anxiety. Bibliotherapy intervention can serve as a distraction technique for children experiencing anxiety due to hospitalization. These findings suggest that bibliotherapy could be considered as a distraction technique for children to manage anxiety levels during hospitalization. However, this study only involved one participant, so future researchers are encouraged to increase the sample size and involve parental roles in addressing anxiety in children during hospitalization.



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