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Fall Risk Management by Nurses in the Inpatient Wards of Aceh Government Regional General Hospital, Indonesia

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Abstract

A patient fall is an incident that commonly occurs with or without injury. Not only does it potentially cause injury, but these incidents can also prolong the length of stay and increase the treatment cost. Nurses play an essential role in assessing and preventing the risk of falls in patients through appropriate education and preventive measures by Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Effective implementation of SOPs can reduce the frequency and impact of fall incidents and improve the safety and quality of patient care. This case study aimed to expound on fall risk management in the Aceh Government Regional General Hospital wards. A quantitative case study type with a cross-sectional study was designed. The sample consisted of 28 nurses, and the data collection tool used an observation sheet to examine the

implementation of fall risk management following the hospital SOP. Data analysis used descriptive statistical tests; the data was then presented as a frequency distribution table. The results show that 67.9% of nurses implemented fall risk management, and 32.1% did not implement it. It was essential to increase nurses' compliance with the SOP for managing fall risk by monitoring and evaluating periodically and in stages by the first-line manager in the Aceh Government Regional General Hospital wards. It is also recommended that nurses routinely assess the risk of falling in patients, educate patients and their families about it, and participate in ongoing training to improve patient safety in hospitals to achieve better quality healthcare.

Keywords: Fall Risk Management, Nurse, Operational Procedure

1. Introduction

A hospital is managed by professional staff with well-organized facilities and infrastructure. The services provided include medical services, continuous nursing care, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases patients suffer. Hospitals are required to provide optimal services to the community ^[1]. Nurses are human resources professionals who offer advice on health services in hospitals. Besides their primary quantity, nurses also represent a profession that provides continuous and ongoing patient services 24 hours a day. Nurses deal with different patients every day, which means they constantly need to meet the needs and expectations of patients ^[2, 5]. In practice, nurses have to continuously improve the quality of service by following developments in science and technology through education and training appropriate to their field of work ^[3].

The quality of nursing services is reflected in the implementation of professional nursing care. Experienced and qualified nurses must have both hard and soft skills because a person's success in the work is influenced by soft skills (80%) and hard skills (20%). Soft skills include communicating, building relationships with others, understanding others, responsibility, cooperation, empathy, and concern ^[4]. Furthermore, nurse compliance is fundamental in implementing patient safety procedures ^[6]. Patient safety is a system designed to make patient care in hospitals safer by preventing injuries caused by an error in the implementation of medical procedures or negligence in taking actions that should be taken. The basic principle of patient safety does not mean that risk must be eliminated. However, it ensures that all actions can be achieved safely ^[7]. The patient safety program aims to reduce the number of Adverse Events (AEs) that frequently occur in patients during hospitalization, thereby reducing losses for patients and hospitals ^[8].

There are six national and global patient safety goals, namely: Identifying patients correctly, improving effective communication, improving the safety of high-alert medications, ensuring the correct surgical site, both the proper procedure and the correct patient, reducing the risk of infection due to health care, and reducing the risk of patient injury due to falls [3].

The sixth goal in patient safety aims to reduce the incidence of injury in hospitalized patients due to falls. The hospital must conduct Fall risk evaluation systematically to identify and mitigate potential risks. Moreover, implementing the fall risk reduction program must be done through established policies and procedures, with monitoring of the consequences of the actions taken. It is essential since fall incidents not only have the potential to cause physical injury but also prolong the length of care and increase patient care costs. In Indonesia, patient fall incidents rank second among the most frequent incidents in hospitals, indicating the need for improvement in prevention efforts [9].

Nurses have a critical role in fall prevention by implementing guidelines, including closely monitoring high-risk patients and involving patients in prevention efforts. The proper implementation of (SOPs) is also crucial for prevention, with nurses playing a role in conducting risk assessments and educating patients.

Based on the observations in the inpatient wards of the Aceh Government Regional General Hospital, not all patients were given a yellow triangle marker at the leg of their bed. Additionally, education about falling prevention was rarely accomplished for patients or companions. Based on this problem, the purpose of this case study was to determine the management of fall risk in the inpatient wards of the Aceh Government Regional General Hospital.

2. Materials and methods

This is a quantitative case study with a cross-sectional design. Data collection was conducted in March-April 2024 in the inpatient ward of the Aceh Regional Government General Hospital. 28 nurses contributed as the samples. Data was collected using the observation sheet developed based on the hospital SOP. Data analysis used descriptive statistical tests; the data was then presented as a frequency distribution table.

3. Research result and discussion

3.1 Results

The results of the case study are presented in the following table:

Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Nurses Demographics

Characteristics	f	%
Age		
26-35 Years	17	60,71
36-45 Years	11	39,29
Gender		
Female	18	64,29
Male	10	35,71
Education		
Vocational Nurse	17	60,71
Professional Nurse	11	39,29
Employment Status		
Civil Servant	8	28,57
Government Employees with Work Agreements	16	57,14
Contracted Employee	4	14,29
Working Period		

<5 year	3	10,71
5-10 year	20	71,43
≥10 year	5	17,86
Level of Clinical Authority		
Clinical Nurse I	3	10,71
Clinical Nurse II	20	71,43
Clinical Nurse III	5	17,86

Table 1 shows that the majority of nurses, 60.71%, are aged between 26-35 years, 64.29% are female, 60.71% vocational nursing education, 57.14% have status as Government Employees with Work Agreements, 71.43% have worked for 5-10 years and 71.43% have clinical authority at the level of Clinical Nurse II.

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Fall Risk Management

Category	f	%
Implemented	19	67,9
Not Implemented	9	32,1

Table 2 shows that 67.9% of nurses implemented fall risk management.

4. Discussion

The results of this case study indicated that 67.9% of the Aceh Government Regional General Hospital inpatient wards nurses implemented fall risk management for patients. To maintain patient safety, strict implementation of standard operating procedures (SOP) is necessary to reduce the risk of falls in hospital inpatient wards [10]. Strategies for managing the risk of falls include identifying at-risk patients, using special bracelets, and regularly evaluating the patient's condition [11]. Compliance with SOPs is essential to reduce the incidence of falls and improve patient safety. However, the observations from this case study showed that 32.1% of nurses had managed fall risk based on the SOPs. Nurses' compliance with this SOP can be assessed by assessing the frequency and consistency of procedures, including initial assessment, management, and reassessment. The main SOP in the management of patient fall prevention is the identification of at-risk patients through the use of special bracelets [12]. These bracelets are an identification and visual communication tool for health workers caring for patients. The bracelets have unique colors that indicate special conditions that require additional attention; for example, patients with a high risk of falling are given a yellow bracelet. The purpose of using these bracelets is to provide information to all health workers caring for patients to improve nursing supervision and ensure the implementation of appropriate preventive measures [13].

Implementing these SOPs was part of a comprehensive prevention strategy involving an initial fall risk assessment upon patient admission and periodic reassessment during changes in the patient's clinical condition [14]. Further fall risk management efforts include regularly monitoring the patient's condition and ensuring good understanding among health workers caring for patients regarding existing procedures [15]. In addition, preventive measures such as lowering the bed, installing safety devices on the bed, and providing written information to patients and their families were also accomplished to improve safety [16]. Nurses' compliance with this SOP was critical in reducing falls and improving the quality of care. Furthermore, regular evaluation and ongoing training for nurses were essential

factors to ensure the effectiveness of fall prevention programs in the hospital environment. Consequently, exemplary implementation of SOPs improves patient safety and the overall quality of nursing services^[17].

Previous research noted that most hospital nurses had not consistently implemented operational standards to reduce the risk of falls. The study's results also showed demographic factors such as age, gender, last education, employment status, length of service, and level of clinical authority. Several factors significantly affected compliance in implementing SOPs to prevent fall risks. Older and more experienced nurses are inclined to have a higher work ethic, mature decision-making skills, and a more substantial commitment to quality of service. In addition, female nurses were generally more compliant in implementing the SOPs than male nurses. The level of compliance also increased with the length of work experience, indicating that expertise plays an essential role in understanding and implementing SOPs effectively^[18].

According to a previous study, efforts to reduce the incidence of patient falls in hospitals could be accomplished through an initial assessment of fall risk, periodic assessment when there was a change in patient condition, and implementation of appropriate preventive measures. Hospitals needed to systematically identify and assess patients at risk of falling and provide unique identification, such as bracelets, to increase their safety. This study emphasized the importance of periodic reassessment of fall risk in inpatients to improve safety during care and reduce the incidence of falls. Periodic reassessment allows the adaptation of preventive strategies according to changes in the patient's clinical condition. Unique identification tags helped medical personnel identify patients who required more intensive monitoring so that the necessary interventions could be completed on time^[19]. Therefore, implementing these procedures was important in improving the quality of health services and overall patient safety.

The benefits of fall risk prevention efforts in nursing services in hospitals included improving environmental safety for patients treated in the wards. Additionally, it played an essential role in enhancing the well-being and prolonging the life expectancy of patients^[20]. Accordingly, nurses needed to consistently comply with the SOPs that regulate the installation of fall risk signs that the hospital had set. In addition, hospitals have to routinely educate new nurses about implementing these operational standards^[21]. Implementing SOPs in fall risk management should also improve patient safety and reduce the incidence of falls in the hospital environment^[22].

5. Conclusions

The results of this case study indicated that 67.9% of nurses managed the risk of falling, and 32.1% did not manage the fall risk in the Aceh Government Regional General Hospital inpatient wards.

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