

The Head Room Experience in Implementing the Nursing Management Function during the Covid-19 Pandemic in General Hospital Sabang: A Phenomenology Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Nursing is one of the important services for hospital to maintain the quality of services that ensure patient safety. Good nursing services can be seen from the nursing management function carried out by the head of the room, especially in the inpatient room.

Purpose: This study explored in depth the experience of the head of the inpatient ward in implementing the nursing management function during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Methods: This study used qualitative design with a phenomenological approach. There were six participants in this study. The data collection method used in-depth interviews with guidelines. Data collection used the interview guidelines and field notes in this study.

Results: The results of this study consisted of five themes, namely planning not according to needs, organizing according to conditions, staffing improvements, optimized the directing and follow-up the controlling.

Conclusion: Hospital need to provide training to ward heads and nurses as well as make improvements to evaluate and develop strategies for hospital during a pandemic based on the obstacles the ward head encountered while managing inpatient room.

Keywords: covid-19, management function, nursing, phenomenology

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BACKGROUND

Nursing is one of the services that must be available in hospitals. It is important for hospitals to maintain the quality of nursing services to ensure patient safety. Good nursing services can be seen from the nursing management function carried out by the head of the room, especially in the inpatient room (Sullivan, 2012). The management functions of nursing are planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling (Marquis & Huston, 2015). A room head is required to understand the organizational goals to be achieved through work guidelines as well as obstacles that can be found when carrying out management functions.

The management function implemented by the head of the room has an important role in controlling the room, especially in the directing function. If the management function is not carried out properly, it will have an impact on staff stress and dissatisfaction at work. In Japan, the staffing factor is identified as a factor that is needed in carrying out nursing services (Kodama & Fukahori, 2017). In Indonesia, organizing and controlling are the dominant factors needed in improving nursing services, especially patient and staff satisfaction (Rizany, Hariyati, Afifah, & Rusdiyansyah, 2019).

The high number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 has an impact on the health service process, especially nursing. There are many challenges and obstacles faced by the head of the room in carrying out the nursing management function during the COVID-19 pandemic. Studies related to the experience of the head of the ward in carrying out the nursing function in America show that the staffing function is very much needed during the pandemic, especially in providing psychological support to staff who are at high risk of experiencing stress and pressure during work (White, 2021). The same thing was also shown in the results of a study in Spain that the staffing function to provide biopsychosocial support to nurses was a priority for the head of the room in carrying out management functions during the pandemic (Vázquez-Calatayud et al., 2021). Studies in Indonesia show that a strong directing function from the head of the room to implement quality nursing services in the room is supervision and effective communication given the high level of interpersonal and interprofessional conflicts in the room during the pandemic (Malawat, Hariyati, & Sari, 2021).

The head of the room is also required to map out the strategies so that the problems that arise during the COVID-19 pandemic can be handled. The study shows that the strategy developed and implemented by the hospital based on the experience of the ward head while managing the inpatient ward can function effectively to minimize threats or obstacles that may occur and cannot be predicted during a pandemic (Deldar, Froutan, & Ebadi, 2021). Based on the above background, the researcher is interested in exploring how the experience of the head of the inpatient room in implementing the nursing management function during the COVID-19 pandemic at the Sabang City Regional General Hospital uses a phenomenological study approach.

OBJECTIVE

This study aims to explore the head room experience in implementing the nursing management function during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODS

The study approach used in this qualitative research is descriptive phenomenology (Shosha, 2017). The researcher must have good preparation as a whole so as to gain the trust of the head of the room so that his experience related to the implementation of nursing management functions during COVID-19 can be expressed by the participants in a comprehensive manner (Moleong, 2017). The research will be conducted in the inpatient room

of the Sabang City Regional General Hospital. The time of the study was carried out from 16 February 2022 to 20 March 2022. Based on data collection there were 6 participants in this study. The data collection method used in this study was in-depth interviews with guidelines that had been prepared based on a theoretical framework and related literature studies. In this study, researchers conducted the validity of the data (trustworthiness of data) to assess the truth and increase the degree of data obtained from research results related to the experience of the head of the room in implementing nursing management functions during the COVID-19 pandemic. There are four criteria so that research results can be trusted such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Kim, June, Rhee, & Wreen, 2020). This study is qualitative, so that data analysis focuses on the results obtained during data collection. The process of analyzing the data on the results of this study uses the steps of Colaizzi (1978) which have been systematically arranged (Tassone, 2017). The process is carried out by converting the audio recordings into words, then compiling a transcript by combining the results of verbatim and fieldnotes or the researcher's field notes. After writing the transcript, the next step is for the researcher to read the transcript repeatedly to get an overview of the results in general and get the keywords from the statements expressed by the participants. Each transcript was re-examined and saw whether there were statements that needed to be explained, if there were statements that were not clear, the researcher re-confirmed to the participants. Then the researchers analyzed the data on a computer using qualitative analysis software. Each statement is formulated by giving a sign (coding) according to the participant's statement to get meaning. Furthermore, the meaning is formulated into a sub-theme and a theme. If discrepancies are found, they should be noted to avoid other data or inappropriate themes.

This research also applies the principles of research ethics. The participant has the right to refuse because in this study the participation is voluntary without coercion. Participants were also explained that this research does not pose a physical risk and the information provided by participants will not be used for something that is detrimental to participants. This is aimed at the seriousness of the researcher in exploring the experience of the participants which aims to get meaning and meaning as relevant data so that it can provide a real picture that can be used as one of the considerations for policy makers, especially in hospitals related to the function of nursing management. In this case the participants have the right to withdraw their participation whenever they want. In addition, the researcher did not include the participant's name to maintain the confidentiality of the information provided by the participant.

RESULTS

Based on the results of data analysis conducted by researchers, there are several themes and sub-themes that represent the research objectives. The explanations of several themes and sub-themes obtained by researchers related to the experience of the head of the room in implementing nursing management functions during COVID-19 are:

1. Planning is not according to needs

This theme explains that there is a difference between planning and the needs needed during COVID-19. Where the need for inpatient rooms during COVID-19 is difficult to predict or the availability of planned needs is more than usual. This theme has two sub-themes which will be explained as follows:

- a. Needs exceed planning

This sub-theme explains that during COVID-19 the needs that had been planned by the head of the room turned out to be more than usual and even the head of the room also had difficulty meeting the needs of COVID-19 patients. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"During COVID the needs planning is more than usual... the availability of planned needs is more than usual" (P1)

"My experience in planning the needs for facilities and infrastructure was very complicated at first, why do I say it is very complicated because the room has not yet been formed so we have to rack our brains again to find the tools that must be needed outside the plan..." (P6)

b. Provision of PPE is limited

This sub-theme explains that due to needs that exceed planning, the head of the room limits the provision of personal protective equipment to staff in an effort to meet existing needs. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"So I limit the provision of PPE by the way I distribute it to them..." (P1)

"...however we continue to use PPE for ourselves, we only limit its use" (P2)

2. Organizing according to conditions

This theme explains that the head of the room has made every effort to carry out the important elements in the organizing function, especially in applying the leadership style. This theme has three sub-themes which will be explained as follows:

a. Leadership style according to conditions

This sub-theme explains that in determining the leadership style, generally the head of the room has a leadership style according to conditions where there are times or circumstances to be democratic and authoritarian if necessary. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"The leadership style is not in the same style that I use... Hmm, I use an authoritarian and democratic style according to conditions..." (P1)

"Basically, I want to be okay, I don't want to be authoritarian (smile) ... but there are certain things that we must emphasize to our friends..." (P2)

b. Management of the official schedule is difficult

This sub-theme explained that the head of the room experienced difficulties during COVID-19 when managing the official schedule, because there were several conditions where the room experienced a shortage of staff, especially when the staff was infected with COVID-19 and had to be rested. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"Because of the shortage of people, it's a bit difficult for me to manage it, but the solution is because people don't increase their guard schedule, which I change..." (P3)

"If there is a shortage of staff, it will automatically exist because some of your friends have contracted this virus, so if you suddenly have to cover your friend's shift who is unable to get sick..." (P5)

c. Staff assignment model according to conditions

This sub-theme explains that the head of the room also sets a model of staff assignment according to conditions. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"For our work system assignment model here during COVID-19, yesterday there was a difference between before and after COVID-19 if yesterday everyone was allowed to hold patients but during COVID-19 I limited those who actually handled the same patients who didn't. (P1)

"Sometimes we are uncertain according to conditions but we are basically a team work..." (P2)

3. Improving staffing

This theme explains that the staffing management function in hospitals needs to be improved because there are many obstacles faced by the head of the room in carrying out this function during covid. This theme has three sub-themes which will be explained as follows:

a. There is no training related to COVID-19

This sub-theme explains that the head of the room has difficulty in directing staff to manage and provide services, especially to COVID-19 patients due to the lack of knowledge and skills related to COVID-19. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"There is no special COVID-19 training for staff... at least we can do it in the room or see or read from google..." (P1)

"During the COVID-19 pandemic we were not given any training..." (P2)

b. No recruitment

This sub-theme explains that in carrying out the staffing function the head of the room has difficulty in managing the lack of staff because the increasing number of patients is not in line with the number of staff available in the treatment room. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"During COVID-19 there were no new staff additions, so the permanent management of the old staff only managed the shortage of shifts" (P5)

"During COVID-19 there is no staff recruitment..." (P1)

c. Customized service schedule

This sub-theme explains that the head of the room must make every effort to adjust the service schedule with limited staff but the number of patients is increasing. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"We see how the conditions are and don't burden friends in the room..." (P3)

"For the service schedule, it's the same as usual, it's just that it's more concerned with seniors and juniors..." (P1)

4. Optimization of directing

This theme explains that in carrying out the directing function with all the shortcomings, obstacles and limitations that occur especially during COVID-19. This theme has three sub-themes which will be explained as follows:

a. Staff motivation

This sub-theme explains that the head of the room makes every effort to motivate staff, especially during COVID-19, so that the health and safety of staff is guaranteed. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"Here we give motivation to the staff, especially our friends who work for 12 hours, if those who work 12 hours, they may be on night duty, so we are here to give motivation..." (P5)

"Actually, I motivate them, it's just one work sincerely, there must be a reward that we get..." (P6)

b. Two-way communication

This sub-theme explains that in whatever condition the head of the room always maintains two-way communication with staff with the aim of maintaining a relationship of mutual trust and helping each other. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"Communication is still reciprocal, for example there is something being discussed, there is feedback from me, the head of the room like that" (P5)

"Communication remains two-way because it cannot be one-way" (P1)

c. Deal with conflict with communication

This sub-theme explained that the head of the room faced various types of conflicts with all the limitations of inpatient rooms in meeting room needs. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"I have to think wisely. I always prioritize communication (during conflict)..." (P2)

"There must be conflict, for things that are uncomfortable, there must be conflict, but for that, we need communication..." (P3)

5. Follow-up controlling

This theme explains that in carrying out the controlling management function, the head of the room really needs some follow-up, especially from hospital management. This theme has three sub-themes which will be explained as follows:

a. The importance of nursing management training

This sub-theme explains that the head of the room really needs support from hospital management to be able to work more effectively. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"I should have been given training as the head of the room on how to properly function the head of the room..." (P2)

"We hope that there will be training as the head of the room on how to do or carry out the duties..." (P1)

b. Staff appraisal not yet available

This sub-theme explains that in carrying out the controlling function, the head of the room requires cooperation with management in compiling staff assessment forms. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"If we don't focus on the results of our work because we don't have an assessment from the hospital itself for staff performance, there is no form.... (P5)

"In my evaluation, I will see that every month the staff, for example, staff A and staff B, can work together according to standart or not..." (P6)

c. The importance of feedback from management

This sub-theme explains the importance of feedback from hospital management in implementing suggestions and input from the head of the room during COVID-19. This is clarified through the results of interviews with participants as follows:

"... the management or the field pays attention to at least there is given a vacation or entertainment such as pods or incentives, don't forget to add it so that the enthusiasm of our friends works behind the scenes" (P4)

"... all the problems in the room that are conveyed by the head of the room and then carried out first whether they can be implemented or not, don't just accommodate but not respond..." (P3)

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the head of the room is required to map out the strategies that must be prepared and carried out by the hospital so that problems that arise during the COVID-19 pandemic can be handled. The study shows that the strategy developed and implemented by the hospital in the planning process based on the experience of the head of the room during managing an inpatient room can function effectively to minimize threats or obstacles that may occur and cannot be predicted during a pandemic (Deldar et al., 2021). Good planning will increase the chance of success for the head of the room in achieving the quality of nursing services, especially during COVID-19. The next management function is organizing which includes activities to determine the organizational structure, determine nursing

assignment models, group activities according to unit goals, work within a predetermined organizational structure, and understand/use appropriate power or authority (Kelly, 2010). Increased COVID-19 cases It certainly has an impact on almost all public service sectors, one of which is hospitals. Health services in hospitals must continue to run in line with the COVID-19 pandemic. This situation makes hospitals have to be really ready and develop strategies, especially in carrying out the organizing function in dealing with the pandemic when providing nursing services (Malawat et al., 2021). It is important for hospitals to manage nursing services so that they can carry out their functions, especially nursing management so that they can produce quality services and ensure patient safety.

Staffing is defined as activities related to staffing, which include recruitment, interviewing, orienting, scheduling, and staff development. Staffing is an important part of the management process in health care organizations, because in this case hospitals have many employees needed for an organization to achieve its goals (Marquis & Huston, 2015). All the challenges encountered during COVID-19 have certainly become important inputs for hospitals in managing staff to be better, such as staff development through providing training.

In the nursing management function, direction is the art of nursing management processes that are useful for achieving nursing goals. The main elements in realizing the direction of nursing staff are motivation, leadership, and communication (Rohayani & Ramdhan, 2019; Turkmen, Aydogdu, Goktepe, & Baykal, 2020). The head of the room has made every effort to carry out the nursing management function with all the limitations that occurred during COVID-19. Efforts that have been made such as providing motivation to staff, conducting two-way communication to maintaining communication in the event of a conflict during the service process, should be maintained and given support by hospital management so that the optimization of this process continues (Fleeson et al., 2017; Singhal, 2020).

The last nursing management function is controlling. Controlling is not a means to determine success or failure but as a way to learn and grow, both personally and professionally (Marquis & Huston, 2015; Asmaningrum, Muhammad Nur, Purwandari, & Ardiana, 2021). Based on this research, the real follow-up that is the great hope of the ward head is nursing management training for the ward head as well as the availability of staff assessments. This effort can be done by training, especially the head of the room to the training section so that it can be followed up by hospital management.

CONCLUSION

The experience of the head room in managing during a pandemic has several obstacles, such as lack of management support to demands from staff, patients and families to quickly deal with problems that arise in the room. This situation requires the head of the room to be serious in managing a room filled with crises, both financially and emotionally. The importance of coordination with nursing management, especially in the field of nursing in preparing plans and evaluating all obstacles faced by the head of the room during COVID-19 so that it can be an improvement in the future. In addition, hospitals need to conduct comparative studies (benchmarking) with other hospitals regarding hospital management during a pandemic.

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