

## NURSING CARE FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH HOSPITALIZATION ANXIETY THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STORYTELLING IN THE ANGGREK ROOM OF THE ARIFIN ACHMAD REGIONAL GENERAL HOSPITAL IN RIAU PROVINCE

**Siti Nurhalijah<sup>1\*</sup>, Gita Adelia<sup>2</sup>, Deswinda<sup>2</sup>, Cindy Febriyeni<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Nursing Profession Program, Faculty Of Nursing, IK<sup>ES</sup> Payung Negeri, Pekanbaru, Indonesia.

<sup>2</sup> Bachelor of Nursing Science Program, Faculty of Nursing, IKES Payung Negeri, Pekanbaru, Indonesia.

**\*Corresponding author:** sitinurhalija2525@gmail.com

### Abstract

Anxiety is one of the most common psychological problems experienced by preschool-aged children during hospitalization. This condition occurs as children face an unfamiliar environment, undergo invasive medical procedures that may cause pain, and experience separation from their parents. Such circumstances often make children uncooperative, anxious, and fearful, which can hinder the healing process. Non-pharmacological interventions such as storytelling therapy are considered effective in reducing anxiety levels among hospitalized children. The purpose of this case study was to describe nursing care for a preschool child with hospitalization anxiety through the application of storytelling therapy in the Anggrek Room of Arifin Achmad Regional General Hospital, Riau Province. The study employed a case study design with an Evidence Based Practice (EBP) approach. Data were collected through observation and interviews using the Fasial Image Scale (FIS) instrument. The intervention was conducted over three consecutive days, with each session lasting 30 minutes. The results showed that before the intervention, the child's anxiety level was in the moderate to severe category. After three days of storytelling sessions, the anxiety level decreased to mild and moderate. The child appeared calmer, more cooperative, and comfortable during nursing procedures. In conclusion, there was a noticeable reduction in anxiety levels before and after the storytelling intervention. Therefore, storytelling therapy is proven to be an effective non-pharmacological approach to reduce hospitalization anxiety in preschool-aged children

**Keyword:** Anxiety ; Hospitalization ; Preschool Children ; Storytelling , Nursing Care.

### INTRODUCTION

Hospitalization in children is a condition that requires children to undergo treatment in a hospital for a certain period of time, either planned or emergency. This experience is often a stressful event, especially for preschool children (3–6 years old), because they have to adapt to an unfamiliar environment, undergo painful medical procedures, and experience separation from their parents. These conditions can trigger psychological responses such as anxiety and fear, which have the potential to hinder the child's healing process (Ku et al., 2025). For preschool-aged children, hospitalization is perceived as an unpleasant experience. Children must deal with unfamiliar healthcare personnel and undergo various medical procedures that cause them concern. The anxiety that arises can cause children to become uncooperative, refuse to eat, have difficulty sleeping, and even experience behavioral regression. If not handled properly, hospitalization anxiety risks causing long-term effects in the form of growth and

development disorders, psychological trauma, and social and emotional disorders (Srinatania et al., 2021; Pawiliyah & Marlenis, 2019).

Anxiety due to hospitalization in children is a global health problem. The World Health Organization (2018) reports that approximately 3–10% of children hospitalized in several developed countries experience significant anxiety (Iqbal & Anggia, 2022). In Indonesia, the prevalence of anxiety disorders in hospitalized children is reported to reach 60–80% (Hafidah et al., 2024). In addition, the morbidity rate of preschool-aged children reaches about 8% of the child population, indicating a high risk of anxiety during hospitalization (Ramadhan, 2022). The impact of hospitalization anxiety is not only short-term but also has the potential to cause long-term consequences, such as psychological trauma, immune disorders, intellectual and social developmental barriers, and the risk of mental disorders such as depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Alehamid et al., 2023). Negative hospitalization experiences can also shape children's negative perceptions of hospitals and reduce their trust in health services in the future (Ku et al., 2025).

To minimize these effects, the application of the concept of atraumatic care is important in pediatric nursing practice. Atraumatic care is a nursing approach that aims to reduce physical and psychological trauma in children during hospital treatment (Musviro et al., 2023). Various non-pharmacological interventions have been developed, including play therapy, guided imagery, clown therapy, video games, and storytelling (Ali et al., 2023). Storytelling is one of the effective non-pharmacological interventions in reducing children's anxiety. This method utilizes language, voice intonation, expressions, and simple media such as hand puppets to attract children's attention and help them express their feelings in a safe and enjoyable way (Srinatania et al., 2021). Various studies have shown the effectiveness of storytelling in reducing anxiety levels in preschool children undergoing hospitalization. Research at Mohammad Noer Pamekasan Regional General Hospital and Bhayangkara Bengkulu Hospital reported a significant decrease in anxiety scores after storytelling (Hafidah et al., 2024; Rahmadani et al., 2022).

Similar results were also found in a study at Meuraxa Regional General Hospital in Banda Aceh and an international study showing that storytelling is more effective than play therapy (Abdi et al., 2025). Based on a preliminary study in the pediatric ward of Arifin Achmad Provincial Hospital in Riau, it was found that most preschool children undergoing hospitalization showed signs of anxiety such as fussiness, crying during medical procedures, difficulty sleeping, and uncooperativeness. The treatment provided so far has generally been limited to parental assistance without specific nursing intervention. Therefore, this study aims to describe nursing care for preschool children with hospitalization anxiety through the application of storytelling in the Anggrek Room at Arifin Achmad Provincial Hospital in Riau.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this scientific paper is a case study with a nursing care approach and evidence-based practice (EBP) interventions. The main intervention provided is storytelling as a non-pharmacological therapy to reduce anxiety levels in preschool children undergoing hospitalization. Nursing care was carried out through the stages of assessment, nursing diagnosis, intervention planning, implementation, and nursing evaluation. The storytelling intervention was carried out for 3 consecutive days, with a duration of 30 minutes per session, given at 10:00 a.m. The children's anxiety levels were evaluated before and after the

intervention using the Face Anxiety Scale (FAS) to assess changes in anxiety levels due to hospitalization.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of the nursing care evaluation after 3 days of storytelling showed a decrease in the level of hospitalization anxiety in preschool children. Based on the assessment using the Face Anxiety Scale (FAS), before the storytelling intervention, children showed moderate to severe anxiety levels, characterized by tense facial expressions, crying, restlessness, and uncooperative behavior during nursing procedures. After three consecutive days of storytelling intervention, the children's anxiety scores decreased to mild anxiety, with more relaxed and calm facial expressions. The evaluation results based on the Indonesian Nursing Outcome Standards (SLKI) showed improvements in several anxiety outcome indicators, namely a decrease in anxious facial expressions, a decrease in restless and crying behavior, and an increase in the children's ability to adapt to the hospital environment. The children appeared more cooperative with nursing procedures, were able to follow simple instructions, and showed increased comfort during treatment. In addition, the children's sleep patterns showed improvement, marked by a decrease in complaints of difficulty sleeping and waking up at night. Overall, the evaluation results indicate that the application of storytelling is effective in reducing hospitalization anxiety levels and improving the psychological response of preschool children during hospital care.

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the author's evaluation, storytelling therapy has been shown to have a positive effect on reducing anxiety levels in children diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) who are undergoing chemotherapy. The storytelling intervention was conducted for 30 minutes per session for 3 consecutive days using picture storybooks such as "The Magic Infusion," "The Brave Child Who Was Given Medicine," and "Changing the Infusion Bottle with the Kind Nurse." After the 3-day intervention, subjective and objective data were obtained from the patients. Subjective data: The child said he was no longer afraid when he saw the nurse and enjoyed listening to stories every day. The patient's mother also said that the child seemed calmer, did not cry easily, and was willing to talk when the IV bottle was changed. Objective data: The child's face appeared relaxed, his expression was cheerful, his pulse and breathing rates were more stable, and he no longer cried when he saw medical equipment. The Face Anxiety Scale (FAS) score decreased from 4 (severe anxiety) to 1 (calm) after three days of intervention. Assessment: Anxiety related to hospitalization was partially resolved (there was a significant decrease in anxiety levels). Planning: Encourage the patient's mother to continue storytelling activities at the hospital and at home, using fun children's storybooks to keep the child calm during the next chemotherapy process.

## CONCLUSION

During the assessment process conducted on September 27, data was obtained from one preschool patient who was hospitalized in the Anggrek Room of Arifin Achmad Provincial Hospital in Riau. Before the storytelling intervention, the results of the assessment using the Face Anxiety Scale (FAS) showed that the child was in the moderate to severe anxiety category. The child appeared restless, cried during nursing procedures, was difficult to calm down, and showed resistance to medical procedures. After the storytelling intervention, the child's anxiety

level decreased to mild anxiety, as indicated by a more relaxed facial expression, reduced crying behavior, and increased cooperative attitude towards the nurse. Storytelling is an effective non-pharmacological approach in helping preschool children cope with hospitalization anxiety. Through storytelling activities, children can divert their attention from hospital stressors, express their feelings adaptively, and build a sense of security and comfort during treatment. This intervention supports the principle of atraumatic care and contributes to reducing anxiety and improving children's emotional responses during hospitalization.

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