

Interpersonal Communication of Caregivers in Increasing the Independent Activities of Daily Life of the Elderly in Nursing Homes

Aneng Yuningsih¹, Betty Suprapti¹, Aan Somana²

¹Department of Nursing, Bakti Tunas Husada University, Tasikmalaya, Indonesia

²Department of Nursing, Budi Luhur College of Health Sciences, Cimahi, Indonesia

Correspondence Author: Aneng Yuningsih

Email: anengyuningsih@dosen.universitas-bth.ac.id

Address: Perum Balokang Permai Blok C Gang Soka 2 No.49, Balokang, Banjar City, Postal Code 46321, West Java, Indonesia, +6285223944988

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The older a person gets, the more their physical abilities will decrease, thus causing dependency in carrying out Activity Daily Living (ADL). Elderly people who live in nursing homes will be assisted by caregivers, therefore the use of appropriate communication is very necessary. **Objective:** This study aims to determine the role of caregivers' interpersonal communication in increasing the ADL independence of elderly people in nursing homes. **Method:** This research used a qualitative method with 2 caregivers and 2 elderly informants selected based on purposive techniques. Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies as well as descriptive data analysis techniques using percentages. **Result:** Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded in this research as follows: (1). Overall, the role of caregivers interpersonal communication in increasing the ADL independence of the elderly is concluded to be quite good. (2). The language used by caregivers is very appropriate in communicating with the elderly. (3). Non-verbal communication carried out by caregivers in interacting with the elderly is by using movements, gestures, facial expressions, symbols and varied voice intonations. (4). The message conveyed in the caregiver's interpersonal communication with the elderly is more about the concept of learning and motivating the elderly to more quickly understand what the caregiver means. **Conclusion:** There is a need for training in interpersonal communication techniques specifically for the elderly for nursing home caregivers or other parties who may interact intensively with the elderly.

Keywords: daily living activities, elderly independence, interpersonal communication

Introduction

The Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reports that the percentage of the elderly population in Indonesia will be 10.48% in 2022. This figure is down 0.34% points compared to the previous year which reached 10.82%. As the percentage of elderly people decreases, their dependency ratio will also decrease to 16.09 in 2022 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2022). This means that 100 people of productive age support 16 elderly people. According to WHO, the elderly are men and women who have reached the age of 60-74 years. The growth rate of the elderly population according to the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2019-2024 is in the Aging Society category with the number of elderly $\geq 7\%$ of the total population and will enter the Super Aged Society category in 2045 with the number of elderly ≥ 21 of the total population (Kementerian Kesehatan RI, 2020).

Health problems in the elderly are increasing along with the increasing percentage of the elderly population. Priority problems in this group include disorders during menopause, osteoporosis, prostate cancer, and cardiovascular and degenerative diseases, which can affect the reproductive organs. In addition, malnutrition and muscle and joint disorders often worsen the situation. Completing the family life cycle, this component will promote improving the quality of the elderly population before and after the end of the reproductive age period (menopause/andropause) (Sadya, 2022).

The high growth of the elderly population presents its own challenges with the emergence of new problems. Physical, mental and social changes (Ayuningtyas, 2019). One of the real problems in the elderly is the inability to carry out Daily Living Activities (ADL) independently and communication disorders. Both problems are caused by decreased function of the musculoskeletal system and auditory system.

Elderly independence in performing ADLs is defined as a person's independence in carrying out daily life activities and functions that are carried out by humans routinely and universally (Eneng Daryanti, 2020). The changes and decline in function that occur in the elderly will cause quite complex problems so that efforts are needed to maintain independence. The impact of a patient's lack of independence in performing ADLs can result in their condition becoming dependent on other people. One action to increase the independence motivation of the elderly is to carry out interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is one type of communication that must be mastered by an inspector because this communication plays a very important role in achieving a desired goal (Sampelan, Kundre, & Lolong, 2015).

Communication with the elderly requires special attention. Communicants must be alert to physical, psychological, emotional and social changes that can affect communication. Communicating with the elderly contains special characteristics, namely communication that is short, clear, complete and simple so that the communication process that takes place interpersonally can run perfectly. Communication with the elderly is a bridge between hope and treatment in caring for an elderly person. When someone communicates with the elderly, there is a possibility that various obstacles will arise in the communication process, giving rise to incompatibilities in communication (Prayogo, 2017). Communication is an important tool for building quality relationships, especially when providing health and care services. By having good communication skills, it will be easier to establish a relationship of trust with the elderly, and this will be more effective in providing professional satisfaction in the service (Cristanty, 2017).

This interpersonal communication research focuses on two caregivers and two elderly people in a nursing home. In an effort to achieve good ADL independence, interpersonal communication is needed between caregivers and the elderly. Here, caregivers act as communicators and communicators who meet face to face with their patients to carry out interpersonal communication. Mulyana (2010) explains that interpersonal communication is communication that occurs between people face to face, which allows each participant to capture other people's reactions directly, both verbally and nonverbally. The purpose of communication is to provide information about something to the recipient, influence the recipient's attitude, provide psychological support to the recipient, or influence the recipient (Waryana, 2016).

Objective

This research aims to determine the role of caregivers' interpersonal communication in increasing the independence of the elderly's daily living activities.

Method

This research was conducted at the Tasikmalaya Welas Asih Nursing Home in December 2023. Using a qualitative method, namely a contextual research that uses humans as instruments, and is adapted to a reasonable situation in relation to data collection which is generally qualitative in nature (Moleong, 2007). This research involved 2 caregivers and 2 elderly informants who were selected based on purposive techniques. The targets of this research are subjects and objects. Where the subjects are caregivers and the elderly. The object of this research is interpersonal communication that occurs between the two subjects. The criteria for sources that the author took include:

1. Two caregivers and two elderly people.
2. Caregivers who work at the Welas Asih Tasikmalaya Nursing Home.
3. Elderly people who live in the Tasikmalaya Welas Asih Nursing Home.
4. Caregivers with the longest tenure and seniors aged 60 years.
5. Elderly people who can still communicate well and are not senile.

Data collection techniques were carried out using observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies as well as descriptive data analysis techniques using percentages. During research, researchers also apply research ethics, including: confidentiality, privacy, and self-determination.

Result

The results of research regarding the role of caregivers' interpersonal communication in increasing the ADL independence of elderly people in nursing homes are:

1. Verbal Communication by Caregivers in Teaching

Verbal communication is communication that uses words, whether orally or in writing. Verbal communication is most widely used in relationships between humans, to express feelings, emotions, thoughts, ideas, facts, data and information and explain them, exchange feelings and thoughts, debate and quarrel with each other. Verbal communication is considered very effective and appropriate because it is done face to face (Kurniati, 2016). From several research results through direct interviews with research informants regarding verbal communication carried out by caregivers in teaching ADL independence to the elderly, it can be concluded that all caregivers in the Welas Asih Nursing Home use verbal communication in communicating and interacting

with the elderly. Verbal communication is considered the most appropriate in interacting with the elderly, especially the elderly whose ability to perceive has decreased due to the aging process and need direct communication.

2. Non-Verbal Communication between Caregivers and the Elderly

The second form of communication used by caregivers in interacting with the elderly is nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is all signals that are not words. Through nonverbal communication we can find out someone's emotional mood, whether they are happy, angry, confused or sad. Our initial impression of knowing someone is often based on their nonverbal behavior, which encourages us to get to know them further (Kurniati, 2016). This form of non-verbal communication is also used by caregivers in the process of interacting and communicating with the elderly in nursing homes. Nonverbal communication is carried out with the aim that the elderly can understand the meaning of what the caregiver conveys in relation to increasing the elderly's independence.

Experts in the field of nonverbal communication usually use the definition of "not using words" strictly, and do not equate non-verbal communication with non-verbal communication. For example, sign language and writing are not considered nonverbal communication because they use words, while intonation and speaking style are classified as nonverbal communication. Nonverbal communication is also different from subconscious communication, which can be verbal or nonverbal communication. Examples of nonverbal communication are using gestures, body language, facial expressions and eye contact, the use of objects such as clothing, haircuts, etc., symbols, as well as ways of speaking such as intonation, emphasis, voice quality, emotional style, and speaking style (Ani Atih, 2022).

From the research results, it was found that nonverbal forms of communication were also used by caregivers in the process of interacting with the elderly. Forms of verbal communication that can be explored by researchers in this study are gestures, body language, facial expressions and eye contact, use of objects such as clothing, sandals, combs and so on, symbols, as well as ways of speaking such as intonation, emphasis, voice quality, emotional style, and speaking style. Other forms of non-verbal communication were also found in this research, namely that caregivers also used varying voice intonations in interacting in the home, from informant 1's statement stating that: "In communicating with the elderly in the compassionate care home, sometimes I have to speak loudly and loudly. in teaching them independence, but you also need to use a low voice".

From the results of research which emphasizes forms of non-verbal communication carried out by caregivers in interacting with the elderly, it is concluded that caregivers use movements, symbols, then varying voice intonations, sometimes loud and soft, then also forms of non-verbal communication are expressed. by using objects on the body such as clothes and tools that are often used by the elderly so that they can more quickly understand the meaning of what is being taught by the caregiver. Apart from that, the form of non-verbal communication that is often used by caregivers in the process of providing independence for the elderly in compassionate nursing homes is using facial expressions and eye contact in interacting with the elderly. The statement regarding the use of facial expressions and facial expressions in communicating with students was confirmed by caregiver 2: "I always use my face to exemplify something to

the elderly, for example when I teach about sadness, of course I have to have a sad expression on my face, so that the elderly can immediately understand what I mean".

All of these are forms of non-verbal communication used by caregivers in communicating with the elderly as found in the results of this research and of course aim to increase the independence of the elderly. Non-verbal communication is very appropriate for caregivers to use because remembering that the ability of the elderly to perceive has decreased, therefore it is necessary to carry out verbal communication as discussed in the research results above.

3. Contents of Messages by Caregivers to the Elderly

Talking about the communication process is of course inseparable from the message that is conveyed, above we have conveyed and explained in detail the results of research on the communication process from the elements of the communicator and the language used. The following is the message, which means discussing the content of the message that is conveyed. by the communicator, in this case caregivers 1 and 2, or clearly the content of the message conveyed by the caregiver to the elderly in the process of making the elderly independent. The opinion from the head of the orphanage regarding the content of the messages conveyed by caregivers to the elderly was that in general they tended to be more about how to make the elderly independent.

The content of the message conveyed was of course about how to make the elderly living in the orphanage more independent, however, when the researchers explored in depth the content of the message conveyed by caregivers to the elderly in relation to increasing their independence, they got quite varied results, including several informant statements: "if the content of the message is "Inviting the elderly to be independent, of course we caregivers always provide motivation to them, including telling the elderly to be active and able to get used to doing ADLs independently considering that caregivers here are limited." A different statement when asked about the content of messages conveyed by caregivers to the elderly in relation to increasing their knowledge was found in the following informants: interview statement "When I educate so that the elderly can understand quickly, I provide motivation in the form of rewards if someone does not quickly follow what I teach, The aim is that the rewards I convey will motivate the elderly to concentrate more".

Discussion

From the research results it can be concluded that the message in the communication process conveyed by caregivers to the elderly in relation to increasing independence in carrying out ADLs, more specifically in nursing homes, is dominant in the subject matter and motivation of the elderly (Ginting, 2020). A quality message will help achieve the communication goal, namely an understanding of meaning. In this study, a quality caregiver's message containing lessons for the elderly will be quickly understood if the caregiver provides the right message in communication. The appropriateness of using media, channels or message concepts will also depend on the quality of the caregiver's resources. This factor will influence the increase in the independence of the elderly.

Basically, intrapersonal communication means that humans always interact with fellow humans, of course by using communication. One type of communication is interpersonal communication. The interpersonal communication carried out by the caregiver is when he interacts with the elderly in the orphanage. Interpersonal communication refers to communication with other people. Someone who has good interpersonal communication

skills will be able to carry out processes such as: counseling, training, guidance, conflict resolution. As is known, interpersonal communication is communication that takes place between two people who have a stable and clear relationship. Interpersonal communication also requires mutual give and take between the actors involved in the communication (Buulolo, Simamora, & Pinem, 2023). Interpersonal communication is the subject of several disciplines in psychology, especially transactional analysis. This communication can be hindered by communication disorders or by arrogance, shyness and so on.

Communication carried out by caregivers is by talking directly within the nursing home or with each elderly person. The conclusion is that all caregivers in compassionate nursing homes use verbal communication in communicating and interacting with the elderly. Verbal communication is considered the most appropriate in interacting with elderly people whose ability to perceive is experiencing a process of decline due to the aging process.

Another form of communication used by caregivers in interacting with their students is nonverbal communication. Non-verbal communication is communication that is mixed with speech, for example movements, facial expressions, eye movements, voice characteristics and personal appearance are a form of non-verbal communication. This form of non-verbal communication is also used by caregivers in the process of interacting and communicating with the elderly in nursing homes. Nonverbal communication is carried out with the aim that the elderly can understand the meaning of what the caregiver conveys in relation to increasing the elderly's independence. Nonverbal communication is a communication process where messages are conveyed without using words.

Other forms of non-verbal communication were also found in this research, namely that caregivers also used varied voice intonations when interacting with the elderly. They used local language. This was more often used by caregivers when carrying out interpersonal communication or in face-to-face situations with the aim of facilitating the process of conveying messages to elderly people are related to efforts to increase independence because it will be understood more quickly and responded better than using language that is not understood by the elderly. The technical use of regional languages is adapted to the conditions of the audience in the field.

The results of research on the communication process from the elements of the communicator and the language used, the following is the message, which means discussing the content of the message conveyed by the communicator, in this case caregivers 1 and 2, or more clearly the content of the message conveyed by the caregiver to the elderly in the teaching and learning process. The content of messages conveyed by caregivers to the elderly generally tends to focus on how to make the elderly independent in terms of fulfilling daily living activities.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded in this research as follows: (1). Overall, the role of caregivers' interpersonal communication in increasing the independence of the daily living activities of elderly people in nursing homes is concluded to be quite good. (2). The language used by caregivers is very appropriate in communicating with the elderly. (3). Non-verbal communication carried out by caregivers in interacting with the elderly is by using movements, gestures, facial expressions, symbols and varied voice intonations. (4). The message conveyed in the caregiver's interpersonal communication with the elderly is more about learning concepts and also motivation for the elderly to more quickly understand what the caregiver means. The suggestion in this research

is that there is a need for special training in interpersonal communication techniques specifically for the elderly for nursing home caregivers or other parties who may interact intensively with the elderly.

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