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Research Article

Storytelling Using Picture Books Reduces Anxiety in Hospitalized Preschool-Aged Children

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Abstrak

Introduction: Anxiety is still one of the problems often experienced by preschool-aged children who are hospitalized. One effort that nurses can make is to tell stories using a picture book.

Objective: This study was to determine the effect of storytelling using picture books on the level of anxiety in hospitalized preschool-aged children.

Methods: The study used a quasi-experimental one-group pre-post test design study. The population of this study was preschool-aged children who experienced hospitalization. The sample used a purposive sampling technique of 20 respondents. The anxiety instrument used a standardized questionnaire from the Zung Self Rating Anxiety Scale. Data analysis used marginal homogeneity.

Results: This study described the level of anxiety before the intervention as moderate anxiety by 15 respondents (75%). The level of anxiety after the intervention showed no anxiety as many as 19 respondents (95%). Bivariate analysis showed that the value of $p = 0.000$.

Conclusion: There was an effect of storytelling using picture books on the level of anxiety in preschool-aged children who have been hospitalized. This can be a recommendation for storytelling using picture books as an alternative to distraction and atraumatic care in reducing anxiety in preschool.

Keywords: anxiety, picture books, preschool, storytelling

Introduction

Hospitalization is a goal that has a process reason. As soon as possible, the child must stay in a temporary hospital to undergo medical treatment and therapy until the child recovers and is allowed to go home. During this process, an emotional response can be shown to the child and the child's parents who are undergoing hospitalization. The child will show a real trauma of stress. From these emotional responses, children often appear as a result of stress by showing feelings of

being very anxious and prejudiced by having made a mistake.¹ The world of anxiety in children undergoing hospitalization in America is 17% or 6.4 million children who experience hospitalization. The state of hospitalization causes a sense of worry about not knowing new experiences and situations to deal with hospitalization.²

While the incidence in Indonesia of anxiety in preschool-aged children according to data in 2010 the number of preschool-aged children was 72% of the total population, 35% of children experienced hospitalization without anxiety, and 45% of children experienced hospitalization with anxiety. Child care is treated with special treatment compared to adult care. This is because it significantly affects the physical and psychological conditions of hospitalized children.³ Anxiety is an attitude influenced by the subconscious of unknown causes, thus issuing an emotional response to the assessment by influencing the attitude of excessive worry. Anxiety itself has characteristics including a feeling of restlessness and nervousness, limbs such as the hands and feet are easier to shake and sweat easily, the head becomes dizzy and sometimes wants to faint, the mouth and throat feel dry and thirsty, so it is difficult to speak and breathing resulting in shortness of breath and shortness of breath, in parts of the heart beating irregularly and pounding fast, in other parts of the body experiencing weakness with cold and feeling numb when going to urinate with marked facial flushing and sensitivity. Efforts were made to reduce anxiety by using a storytelling intervention using picture books for preschool-aged children who were hospitalized; the intervention was carried out to develop the power created by children by imagining with motivation and feeling cheerful.⁴

Therapy that is very suitable for children to express their expressiveness by doing play therapy, children will express their feelings through games, one of which is by using picture storybooks or illustration books.⁵ Bibliotherapy is one of the media used in children who are undergoing hospitalization.⁶ Illustrated stories as a medium to communicate through strong illustrations and serve as education or just as a means of entertainment for children undergoing hospitalization.⁷ Based on the results of interviews with the head of the inpatient room, it was found that the child was experiencing anxiety. The reaction shown is that the child cries in fear and even refuses when medical action is taken, the child tends always to want to be accompanied by his parents or family waiting for him, in this case, the nurse or doctor when going to carry out an examination or action accompanied by his parents. This study aimed to determine the effect of storytelling using picture books on preschool-aged children who were hospitalized.

Methods

This study used a quasi-experimental research design with one group pre-post design with storytelling intervention using picture books to one intervention group who were given storytelling treatment.⁸ This study aimed to determine the effect of storytelling using picture books on preschool-aged children who were hospitalized, before and after telling stories using picture books.

The technique used is purposive sampling. The method used is filling out a standardized questionnaire from the Zung Self Rating Anxiety Scale. By providing intervention and instructions to the respondent's parents to tell stories for three days.⁹ This study also used the Marginal Homogeneity test with a population of 178 children and a sample of 20 respondents.

This research was conducted on preschool-aged children who were hospitalized in the inpatient ward of RSUP F Jakarta. This study has successfully passed the ethical clearance test with the ethics letter number 3651/Sket/Ka-Dept/RE/STIKIM/IX/2019 in the Ethic Committee of Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Indonesia Maju.

Results

Table 1 The level of Anxiety Before Storytelling Using Picture Books (n=20)

No	The level of Anxiety	Before Storytelling	Percentage (%)
1	No anxiety	0	0.0
2	Mild anxiety	4	20.0
3	Moderate anxiety	15	75.0
4	Severe anxiety	1	5.0
	Total	20	100.0

Table 1 shows the frequency distribution of anxiety levels before storytelling using picture books to respondents in the children's inpatient room at RSUP F, describing the majority of 15 respondents (75%) experiencing moderate anxiety.

Table 2 The level of Anxiety After Storytelling Using Picture Books (n=20)

No	The level of Anxiety	After Storytelling	Percentage (%)
1	No anxiety	19	95.0
2	Mild anxiety	1	5.0
3	Moderate anxiety	0	0.0
4	Severe anxiety	0	0.0
Total		20	100.0

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of anxiety levels after storytelling using picture books to respondents in the children's inpatient room at RSUP F, describing the majority of 19 respondents (95%) experiencing no anxiety.

Table 3 The Effect of Storytelling Using Picture Books on Preschool-Aged Children Who Were Hospitalized (n=20)

Before Storytelling	After Storytelling		Total	P-value
	No anxiety	Mild anxiety		
Mild anxiety	4	0	4	0.000
Moderate anxiety	14	1	15	
Severe anxiety	1	0	1	
Total	19	1	20	

Based on table 3, it can be concluded that the respondents in this study amounted to 20 people. With a significant value or sig. (2-Tailed) of 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, it means that there is an effect of storytelling using picture books on the level of anxiety in preschool-aged children hospitalized in the pediatric inpatient room of RSUP F.

Discussion

The study results before telling the story the majority of 15 respondents (75%) experienced moderate anxiety, and after telling the majority of 19 respondents (95%) did not experience anxiety. The results of this study are in line with other studies that describe that most children experience excessive anxiety during hospitalization before telling stories using picture books.¹⁰ Another similar study describes that most 67.7% of children experience anxiety during hospitalization.¹¹ Children who experience anxiety can be caused by several factors, including children who feel lost due to separation from family members and friends, children who are in a foreign environment, and children who are afraid of health workers who will take care of them.^{12,13} The results of this study found a significant effect of storytelling using picture books on the anxiety level of preschool-aged children who were hospitalized. Another study is in line with the level of anxiety during hospitalization. As much as 21.1% of children experienced moderate anxiety.¹⁰ The results showed a decrease in anxiety in preschool-aged children who experienced hospitalization.¹¹

Efforts to reduce anxiety in preschool-aged children are to tell stories using picture books to change behavior. Children can be trained by telling it so that there is a distraction in children from telling stories.¹⁴ Based on the theory, the distraction process is a transitional method used to suggest children forget the anxiety experienced. In the distraction process caused by a pleasant sensory stimulus, the release of endorphins that can inhibit the anxious stimulus that will be transmitted to the brain becomes more negligible, so this will be able to divert fear and anxiety.¹⁵ Based on another theory, storytelling uses picture books as a unique medium due to the merging of text and images that are creatively formed that will attract children's attention.¹⁶ Thus, the researcher assumes that storytelling using picture books can reduce anxiety in preschool-aged

children who are hospitalized because of the distraction process and the release of endorphins which will make the anxious stimulus less when it is transmitted to the brain.

Conclusion

Based on the study results, it can be concluded that in this study, the level of anxiety was obtained before the storytelling intervention using picture books. The majority experienced moderate anxiety, and the study results after the storytelling intervention were found not to experience anxiety. There is an effect of storytelling using picture books on anxiety in preschool-aged children who experience hospitalization.

Conflict of Interest Declaration

This study has no interest in any agency.

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