

## Factors of Doctor's Emphaty in the Successful Treatment of Patients

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### ABSTRACT

Empathy is closely related to the field of Health and plays an important role in patient health relationships. Empathy is the standard of the therapeutic relationship between doctors and patients, according to research it has been proven that empathy affects patient care outcomes. By using a literature study approach to various research results and other literature, this journal aims to provide an overview of doctors' empathy factors in treating patients based on various scientific literature related to research results that have been carried out. Based on the results of the study, it can be seen that the attitude of doctors towards patients when performing treatment is one of the keys to the success of patient care. If doctors experience obstacles in showing empathy, the success of patient care will decrease, and vice versa.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Competition in the health sector, especially Indonesian medicine in the era of globalization, is increasingly rapid, competition occurs due to the large number of patients who tend to seek treatment abroad or with foreign doctors working in Indonesia. According to the Singapore Ministry of Health and the Singapore Tourism Board, in 2011 Indonesia accounted for 47.2% of patients while according to the Malaysia Healthcare Tourism Council 2012, using 2011 data, there were 57% of the total medical tourists or more than 330,000 Indonesians who seeking treatment in Malaysia. Poor doctor-patient communication and disappointing quality of care are reasons patients prefer to seek treatment abroad. Due to these problems, doctors and dentists in Indonesia are expected to provide empathy, care and build good relationships good for patients. The core element in effective communication is the doctor's sense of empathy for the patient. Empathy is the basis of the therapeutic relationship between doctor and patient. Over the last decade the concept of clinical empathy has undergone significant changes, empathy has been aimed at improving communication, trust, and outcomes. 6,7 According to the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) clinical empathy is defined as an act of understanding one's emotional state without having to experience it.

The core element in effective communication is the doctor's sense of empathy for the patient. Empathy is the basis of the therapeutic relationship between doctor and patient. Over the last decade the concept of clinical empathy has undergone significant changes, empathy has been aimed at improving communication, trust, and outcomes. According to the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) clinical empathy is defined as an act of understanding one's emotional state without having to experience it. According to Piasecki M (2003) doctors who understand patients are more important than other communication factors for a significant doctor-patient relationship. By understanding the opinions and complaints of patients first, we can build the openness and trust that we need in building cooperation or synergy with patients. Haryanto SY (2013) said that to get empathic communication, an approach can be done by listening as a sign of empathy. Empathy can be seen as interpersonal interaction behavior that is directly related to patients by reducing anxiety and can be directly accepted by patients.

Empathy is known to be useful for improving the doctor-patient relationship and also has an effect on the patient's recovery rate. Initially a doctor used empathy to focus on listening to patients, but that priority shifted to being a doctor who was more concerned with getting his job done without listening to the patient properly. It is known that doctors prefer to keep their distance from patients to avoid emotional feelings and focus more on In addition, other problems also arise due to the long waiting time for patients caused by doctors arriving late. These problems have an impact where patients feel that the examination time is too short compared to the time spent waiting for calls in the waiting room.

The results of the research by Hojat et al (2011) stated that the doctor's empathy can affect the success in the treatment of patients who have diabetes, which can be shown by the controlled hemoglobin A1C in these patients.<sup>15</sup> Meanwhile, according to the results of research from Canale et al (2012), diabetic patients from doctors who showed moderate and low empathy attitudes did not show a significant difference in patient care. Refers to the description above, this journal aims to provide an overview of the doctor's empathy factor in treating patients based on various scientific literature related to the results of research that has been done.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the section below, some Health terms related to empathy and Health are explained.

### **Empathy in Health**

Empathy is closely related to the field of health, empathy is the standard of the therapeutic relationship between doctors and patients, according to research it has been proven that empathy has an effect on patient care outcomes. Empathy is often cited as a core aspect of health consultation, especially in primary care settings. According to Coulehan et al., empathy is the ability of doctors to be able to understand the situation, perspective and feelings of the patient, and also to make communication that can be understood by the patient. When performing health services, it is usually followed by empathy (understanding the patient's concern) as a response to the suffering of others and the desire to relieve their suffering. According to Zin (1993) through empathy, not only doctors enter the patient's world, but also patients can share the world and its burdens. with an empathetic doctor. Zin also mentions this method is at the root of the therapeutic potential of empathy. According to a double-blind study, it was also stated that when highly empathetic doctors gave patients a placebo, the results were as effective as the treatment usually given by doctors.

### **Clinical Empathy**

Health professionals reach agreement on translating the word empathy clinically. The definition itself has many ranks ranging from simply borrowing the patient's feelings about their illness to actually understanding and permeating those feelings. Halpern explains how empathetic doctors produce care. effectively through "associative understanding", which will involve doctors not only dealing with patients emotionally, but also cognitively. The definition for clinical empathy, using Halpern and Morse's opinion is to care about someone's suffering in order to care for that person. Caring is the root of an empathetic response.

Clinical empathy can be divided into two systems: affective and cognitive. Cognitive clinical empathy, is the rational (logical or conceptual) ability to judge the reasons for the suffering of others and to alleviate that suffering. While affective clinical empathy, is an emotive reaction (feeling or passion) for the suffering of others. Therefore, it involves not only a feeling for or an emotional response to one's suffering but also a more basic arousal for those who suffer.

Affective clinical empathy has two dimensions. The first is rational, which is related to logical and conceptual analysis as the reason for a person's pain and suffering. The second is behavior, which includes the ability to act in order to reduce one's pain and suffering.

### **Empathy in the Doctor-Patient Relationship and Its Barriers**

Empathy plays an important role in the doctor-patient relationship and is known to have a positive impact on patient health. Empathy is shown to be at the core of success in the medical world which results in many benefits for both patients and doctors. Doctors who show empathy towards their patients are known to be more few complaints of malpractice. Empathy is one of the strong communication skills, which combines a relationship and understanding that includes mind, body, and spirit. Studies show that empathetic doctors will get professional success due to improved patient outcomes.

Through the attitude of a doctor who understands the patient's experience, empathy will increase doctor-patient interaction, therefore the doctor will understand how to treat the patient properly and accurately. Patients will tend to trust an empathetic doctor and also patients are easier to understand the treatment options provided by doctors, because patients see doctors really care about the patient's situation. Empathy is also known to reduce patient anxiety and make patients feel empowered. According to Eikeland et. al, the advantage of an empathetic attitude is to increase accuracy in diagnosing patients and reduce burnout symptoms in doctors.<sup>43</sup> Doctors who show empathy towards patients will feel their work is well fulfilled compared to doctors who cannot empathize.

Empathy in the medical world is defined as the doctor's ability to understand the patient's situation, perspective and feelings, communicate accurately to patients and behave with understanding in a supportive therapeutic atmosphere. The doctor-patient relationship is a personal interaction between service providers and service recipients, empathic has covered the doctor-patient relationship. Expressing empathy can be divided into two different ways. The first is to listen to the patient attentively and the second is to try to give a good response to the problems that the patient is talking about. Empathy has been considered to be an important thing in the development of a therapeutic relationship. Verbal and nonverbal communication plays an important role so that patients can accept and understand doctors well

Positive results in patient care are usually also related to the quality of the doctor-patient relationship and communication. Communication between doctors and patients is needed to obtain optimal results, in the form of solutions to health problems that can be resolved and patient recovery. According to Marheni A (2008) In addition to being empathetic, doctors need to provide feedback to patients about something they understand so that patients know that the doctor understands them. Positive effects of relationships based on empathy are found on both sides, both doctors and patients. Showing empathy towards patients can be done in an informal way. provide new information too quickly, do not impose views and do not make assumptions. As explained above about

how important empathy is and its benefits for the success of patient care, empathy still has obstacles that cause a decrease in doctors' empathy attitudes towards patients, some of which are:

### **Workload Barriers**

When the doctor's workplace environment has a heavy workload, it causes doctors to fatigue which causes doctors to not have the emotional energy to show their empathy towards patients. Tight working hours can also cause doctors to fatigue which will affect the doctor's physical condition.

### **Burn out Factor**

Doctors who have a high empathy attitude are indeed very good for patients, but on the other hand it also brings negative effects to the doctor. Sometimes the doctor's empathy can actually lead to high causes of doctors experiencing depression. Therefore, the doctor's empathy towards patients has decreased due to emotional exhaustion and physical exhaustion which in medical terms is called burnout. Burnout can make a person feel depressed and hopeless, usually will be associated with increased physician failure and reduced empathy for patients. Finally, rather than being drawn into patient suffering, physicians prefer to remain emotionally detached from their patients.

### **Patient Attitude Barriers**

Patients sometimes have a disturbing attitude due to fear in dealing with their illness, resulting in patients saying inappropriate language, demanding things that are unreasonable, even leading to physical violence against medical personnel. friendliness, concern, and sensitivity depending on the type of emotion and thought expressed by the patient .

### **How long the patient waits**

When a patient wants to go to a doctor, it is certain that the patient will wait before being called for an examination, but when the waiting time is more than 30 minutes, the patient will feel uncomfortable. The length of time waiting usually occurs in the outpatient department. because of the large number of patients waiting in line to be examined by a doctor. In addition to the large number of patients, the lack of medical personnel, old equipment, and the length of the registration process are also factors in the length of time patients wait.

### **Lack of Inspection Time**

Sufficient consultation time will have a good impact on the patient because the doctor gives more time so that the patient can feel the doctor's empathy and explain his complaint well. But in reality, the patient feels a lack of this when consulting the doctor. and examining patients produces an obstacle, this occurs due to the large number of patients waiting which results in doctors conducting consultations in a short and hasty manner.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This journal was compiled using the Library study method approach. Author Prepares the analysis referring to various research results, journals, and other supporting literature in accordance with the journal's objectives. Data collection is done through databases Medline (PubMed), Ebsco etc.; as well as various international and national textbooks and journals with reference priority criteria in the last 10 years, namely from 2010 to 2020.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The word empathy comes from the German 'Ein-fühlung', which can be interpreted in a feeling. Empathic communication shows that there is mutual understanding between the communicator and the communicant, so that empathic communication is created, the communicator must show the communicant such as showing interest in the communicant, not interrupting the conversation, having a calm attitude, not having bad prejudice, being open to suggestions, having an understanding attitude, and have good morals. Empathy has a close relationship in the health sector because it is known that the higher the empathy shown by the doctor, the higher the success of treatment for patients. In the health field, empathy is likely to improve patient outcomes by improving doctor-patient communication which makes doctor consultations more effective. Delivering empathy is divided into two different ways, first listening to the patient attentively and the second trying to give a good response to the problems told by the patient.

But the doctor's empathy can be affected by several obstacles, namely the heavy workload of doctors causing doctors to be exhausted which causes doctors to not have the emotional energy to show their empathy towards patients, the burnout factor can make a person feel depressed and hopeless, usually will related to the increasing failure of doctors and reduced empathy for patients, the patient's attitude towards doctors also becomes a barrier to empathy due to the patient's fear of dealing with his illness, resulting in patients saying inappropriate language, demanding unreasonable things, even leading to physical violence against medical personnel, Another obstacle is the length of time the patient waits, and the lack of time for a doctor's examination makes the short time of patient consultation resulting in an obstacle, this occurs due to the large number of patients waiting which results in doctors.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the doctor's attitude towards the patient when performing treatment is one of the keys to the success of patient care. If doctors experience obstacles in showing empathy, as described above, the success of patient care will decrease, and vice versa. Therefore, every doctor or other medical personnel must be able to work with patients using an empathetic attitude such as showing a calm attitude, being prejudice-free towards patients, being aware of patient choices or suggestions, having an understanding attitude, trying to understand and understanding patients.

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