



The Relationship between Family Support and Medication Adherence among Patients with Schizophrenia

Haslina^{1*}, Muhamad Ikhsan¹, Suhaeni¹, Budi Prasetyo^{1*}

¹Prodi S1 Keperawatan, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan (STIKES) IST Buton, Indonesia

*Korespondensi: muhammadikhsan90@gmail.com

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Abstract

Schizophrenia patients require consistent adherence to their treatment process in order to maintain stability and improve their quality of life. This study aims to examine the relationship between family support and medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia. The research was conducted at several community health centers in Lakudo District using a descriptive analytic design with a cross-sectional approach. The population consisted of family members of schizophrenia patients, and the research sample was selected using a purposive sampling technique. Family support was measured using a questionnaire, while medication adherence among schizophrenia patients was assessed using the Morisky Medication Adherence Scale. The findings indicate that many respondents experienced low levels of family support and a considerable number of patients showed non-adherence to their medication regimen. Statistical analysis using the Chi-Square test demonstrated a significant relationship between family support and medication adherence among schizophrenia patients in Lakudo District, Central Buton Regency. These results highlight the important role of family involvement in supporting patients throughout the treatment process. Strong family support can encourage patients to follow their medication schedule more consistently and contribute to better management of schizophrenia.

1. Introduction

Mental illness known as schizophrenia affects a person's thoughts, perceptions, emotions, and behavior. Schizophrenia is a syndrome characterized by a wide variety of symptoms, similar to other complex diseases such as cancer (Videbeck, 2020). This condition is generally marked by delusions, illusions, hallucinations, disturbances in mental processes, and unusual behaviors such as aggression or catatonia (Riskasdas, 2018). The World Health Organization

estimates that around twenty million people worldwide are living with schizophrenia, making it one of the most common severe mental disorders (2019). In Indonesia, national health data indicate that hundreds of thousands of individuals, representing a small proportion of households, have family members experiencing psychotic disorders or schizophrenia. In Southeast Sulawesi Province, the prevalence of psychosis or schizophrenia among household members has also been reported, reflecting the continuing need for attention to mental health services and community support in the region (Survei Kesehatan Indonesia, 2023).

Based on the concept of social support, family support consists of four main components: appreciation, emotional support, informational support, and instrumental support. Adequate family support plays an important role in encouraging patients with schizophrenia to follow their treatment plans and take prescribed medications regularly (Tiara et al., 2020). One of the main causes of relapse in individuals with schizophrenia is non-adherence to medication, which can also prolong the course of mental illness. Various factors may influence medication adherence among people with schizophrenia, and one of the most significant factors is family support. Strong support from family members can motivate patients to continue their treatment and maintain better control over their condition (Putra & Sukmonowati, 2021).

The success of treatment for patients with schizophrenia largely depends on their adherence to medication and the overall treatment process. Patient adherence is essential to ensure that individuals with schizophrenia can live more independently and maintain a good quality of life. Consistent compliance with treatment helps control symptoms, reduce the risk of relapse, and support the stability of the patient’s mental health condition. On the other hand, inappropriate or inconsistent management of the illness may lead to serious consequences. Poor treatment adherence can worsen the patient’s condition and increase the risk of complications, including depression and other mental health problems (Rahmawati & Maryoto, 2021).

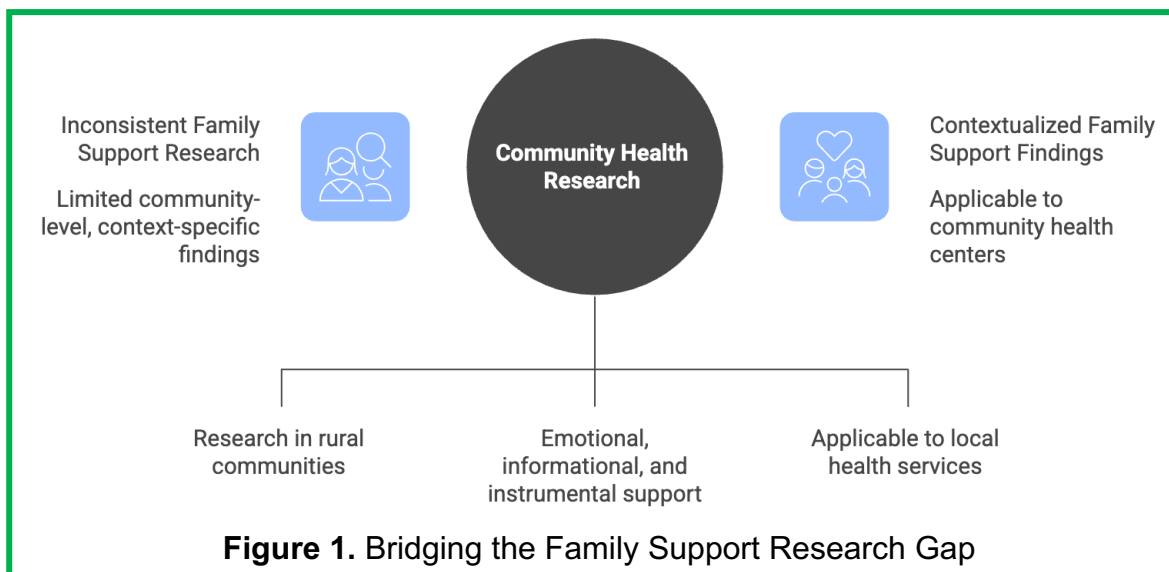


Figure 1. Bridging the Family Support Research Gap

Although various studies have highlighted the importance of family support in improving medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia, research findings still show inconsistencies in how different forms of family support influence

patient behavior in treatment adherence. Some studies emphasize emotional support as the most influential factor, while others highlight the role of informational and instrumental support in encouraging patients to follow their medication regimen. In addition, many previous studies have been conducted in hospital settings or urban areas, whereas research focusing on community health center settings and rural communities remains limited. This condition creates a research gap regarding how family support influences medication adherence among schizophrenia patients at the community level, particularly in local health service settings. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the relationship between family support and medication adherence among schizophrenia patients in community health centers to provide more contextual and applicable findings.

Central Buton Regency has fourteen community health center service areas that provide health services to the community. The number of people with schizophrenia in this regency is relatively high and has shown an increasing trend in recent years. Health data indicate that the number of schizophrenia patients continued to rise from the previous years, reflecting a growing concern regarding mental health conditions in the region. Reports from the Central Buton District Health Office show that most schizophrenia patients are concentrated in the service areas of Gu Community Health Center and Wamolo Community Health Center, both located in Lakudo District. These areas account for a significant proportion of schizophrenia cases in the regency, indicating the need for greater attention to treatment adherence, family involvement, and community-based mental health support in these locations (Dinkes Kabupaten Buton Tengah, 2023).

2. Methods

This study employed a descriptive analytic research design with a cross-sectional approach. The cross-sectional approach was used to describe and analyze the relationship between the variables studied at a single point in time without conducting longitudinal follow-up. Data were collected simultaneously from respondents to obtain a clear picture of the current conditions related to the research variables. This design was chosen because it allows researchers to examine the relationship between variables efficiently within a relatively short period while providing an overview of the phenomena occurring in the research setting.

The study was conducted in three Community Health Centers (Puskesmas) located in Lakudo District, Central Buton Regency. The population in this study consisted of family members of patients diagnosed with schizophrenia who were registered in the working areas of the selected health centers, totaling 52 respondents. From this population, the sample was determined to be 46 respondents using a purposive sampling technique, in which respondents were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. This sampling technique was used to ensure that the participants had appropriate characteristics and were able to provide the information needed for the research.

The variables in this study consisted of independent and dependent variables. The independent variable was family support, which was measured using a family support questionnaire developed based on indicators of emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support. Meanwhile, the dependent variable was medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia, which was measured using the Morisky Medication Adherence Scale (MMAS) instrument. This instrument

was used to assess the level of patients' adherence to taking medication according to the recommendations of health professionals.

Data collection in this study was conducted using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents who were family members of patients with schizophrenia. The data collection process was carried out after respondents received an explanation regarding the purpose of the study and agreed to participate as respondents. The questionnaire was used to obtain information related to the family's condition and their involvement in supporting the patient's treatment process. This method was chosen because it allows the researcher to obtain systematic data and facilitates the identification of conditions related to the research variables. Data analysis in this study was carried out in several stages. First, univariate analysis was performed to describe the distribution of respondents' characteristics and each research variable. Next, bivariate analysis using the Chi-Square test was conducted to examine the relationship between family support and medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia. The results of the statistical analysis were interpreted based on the significance value (p -value) with a predetermined level of confidence to determine whether there was a significant relationship between the two variables.

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1 Findings

The research results showed that the characteristics of respondents based on age indicated the lowest frequency in the 17–26 years age group with 1 respondent (2.2%), while the highest frequency was found in the 57–66 years age group with 18 respondents (39.1%). Based on gender, 25 respondents (54.3%) were male and 21 respondents (45.7%) were female. Regarding the respondents' educational background, the highest frequency was found among those whose last education level was elementary school (SD) with 17 respondents (37.0%), while the lowest frequency was among those with a bachelor's degree with 3 respondents (6.5%). In terms of occupation, the majority of respondents worked as fishermen/housewives with 35 respondents (76.1%), while the lowest frequency was among civil servants (PNS) with 2 respondents (4.3%).

Table 1. Family Support for Patients with Schizophrenia

Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Poor	26	56.5
Good	20	43.5
Total	46	100

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents had poor family support, with 26 respondents (56.5%). Meanwhile, 20 respondents (43.5%) were categorized as having good family support. These findings indicate that more than half of the families of patients with schizophrenia still have limited levels of support in assisting patients during their treatment process. This condition suggests the need for increased family awareness and involvement in supporting medication adherence and the recovery process of patients with schizophrenia.

The results showed that family support was highest in the poor category, with 26 respondents (56.5%), while the good category had 20 respondents (43.5%),

representing the lowest proportion. Based on the data collected from the four types of family support, the most frequently reported form of support in the questionnaire was appraisal support. In this type of support, family members provide motivation and help increase the self-confidence of schizophrenia patients regarding the condition they are experiencing. Meanwhile, the lowest level of support reported in the questionnaire was instrumental support, which refers to support in the form of providing physical needs such as services, financial assistance, and material support.

The results of the questionnaire responses indicated that informational support and emotional support were provided in relatively similar proportions among the respondents. Informational support refers to the assistance given by family members in the form of suggestions, advice, guidance, and the provision of important information related to the health condition of patients with schizophrenia. Through this type of support, families help patients better understand their illness, the importance of treatment, and the need to follow medical recommendations. The presence of informational support can also encourage patients to be more aware of their health condition and motivate them to participate actively in their recovery process. Meanwhile, emotional support plays a crucial role in creating a sense of comfort and security within the family environment. When family members show empathy, understanding, and compassion toward patients with schizophrenia, patients are more likely to feel accepted and valued despite the challenges they face. Emotional support helps reduce feelings of isolation, anxiety, and stigma that are often experienced by individuals with mental disorders. As a result, patients can develop greater confidence and emotional stability, which can positively influence their daily functioning and overall well-being.

Table 2. Medication Adherence

Category	Number (n)	Percentage (%)
Adherent	12	26.1
Non-adherent	34	73.9
Total	46	100

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on Table 2, respondents categorized as adherent to medication were 12 people (26.1%), while the majority of respondents were categorized as non-adherent, totaling 34 people (73.9%). Most respondents often did not take medication according to the prescribed instructions. This condition is partly caused by the lack of family involvement in supervising and ensuring that patients take their medication regularly. Patients with schizophrenia often require continuous support from family members to maintain consistent treatment routines. When families do not actively monitor medication intake or assist patients in following the prescribed dosage and schedule, patients may become less disciplined in taking their medication. Limited supervision can reduce patients' awareness of the importance of regular treatment, which may negatively affect the stability of their mental health condition. In many cases, patients tend to take medication only when symptoms begin to recur because family members do not consistently monitor treatment routines. The absence of reminders from family members may also cause patients to forget their medication schedule, especially since individuals with schizophrenia often experience cognitive difficulties such as memory problems or reduced concentration. Medication adherence therefore becomes a crucial factor in

preventing relapse among patients with schizophrenia. Consistent adherence to medication can help control symptoms, maintain mental stability, and support the long-term recovery process of individuals living with schizophrenia.

Bivariate analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between family support and medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia using the Chi-Square statistical test. The analysis aimed to examine whether differences in the level of family support were associated with the level of medication adherence among patients. Family support was categorized into several levels and then compared with the adherence status of patients in taking their prescribed medication. The distribution of respondents based on the level of family support and medication adherence is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Relationship Between Family Support and Medication Adherence of Schizophrenia Patients

Family Support	Medication Adherence		Total	P-Value	
	Adherent	Non-Adherent		n	%
Poor	0	0.0	26	56.5	
Good	12	26.1	8	14.8	
Total	12	26.1	34	73.9	

Source: Primary Data, 2024

Based on the results of the Chi-Square statistical test, a p-value of 0.000 was obtained with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. Since $p < \alpha$, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between family support and medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia in Lakudo District, Central Buton Regency. These findings indicate that better family support is associated with higher levels of medication adherence among schizophrenia patients.

Good family support has a positive influence on the psychological condition of patients with schizophrenia and can improve medication adherence. Through attention, affection, and appreciation from family members, patients feel cared for, supported, and motivated to recover. Conversely, when families show little concern toward the patient's treatment, the risk of relapse increases and medication adherence may decline. Therefore, optimizing family support is one important way to help individuals with schizophrenia remain compliant with their medication regimen. This support can take various forms, such as providing consistent attention, reminding patients of their medication schedules, accompanying them during medical check-ups, creating a comfortable environment, and being willing to listen when patients wish to share their experiences.

3.2 Discussions

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of respondents were in the older age group, showing that family members who provide care for patients with schizophrenia are generally individuals who already have a mature age and greater responsibility within the family. Older family members often take on the role of caregivers because they have more experience in managing household and family health issues. In addition, both men and women were involved in supporting patients, which reflects that caregiving responsibilities within the family are shared among

family members. The involvement of both genders in caring for patients is important because emotional and practical support from close family members can contribute significantly to the patient's stability and recovery process.

The educational background of respondents also illustrates the social context of families caring for schizophrenia patients. Most respondents had relatively low levels of formal education, which may influence their understanding of mental health conditions and the importance of continuous treatment. Limited educational background can reduce access to accurate information about schizophrenia, including knowledge about medication adherence, relapse prevention, and proper patient care. Therefore, health education from health workers is essential to improve family knowledge and awareness so that families are better prepared to support the recovery process of patients with schizophrenia.

The results of this study also indicate that family support for patients with schizophrenia is still relatively limited. Many families have not been able to provide optimal support in assisting patients throughout the treatment process. Family support plays a very important role in the management of schizophrenia because patients often require consistent supervision, encouragement, and emotional reassurance. When family involvement is low, patients may experience difficulties in maintaining treatment routines and adapting to their daily lives. This condition highlights the importance of increasing family awareness and participation in the treatment process so that patients receive the support needed for recovery. Furthermore, the analysis of different forms of family support shows that families tend to provide encouragement and motivation that help strengthen the patient's confidence in facing their illness. This type of support is important because patients with schizophrenia often experience emotional challenges, stigma, and feelings of isolation. However, support related to practical assistance, such as providing material resources or helping with daily treatment needs, is still relatively limited. This may be influenced by the economic conditions of the family or limited understanding of how to assist patients effectively. Strengthening both emotional and practical support from families is therefore essential to improve the quality of care and the recovery process of patients with schizophrenia.

Considering the high percentage of medication non-adherence among individuals with mental disorders, including schizophrenia, medication adherence becomes a crucial aspect of patient care and recovery. Consistent adherence to prescribed medication helps control symptoms, prevent relapse, and maintain the stability of the patient's mental condition. The ability of patients with schizophrenia to live more independently and achieve a better quality of life is strongly influenced by their commitment to following the therapeutic regimen recommended by health professionals. When patients regularly take their medication, they are more likely to maintain emotional balance, improve social functioning, and participate more actively in daily life. Conversely, if the illness is not managed properly due to poor adherence to treatment, it may lead to serious consequences such as worsening symptoms, repeated hospitalizations, depression, and even death (Hamdani, 2017). Therefore, ensuring consistent medication adherence is essential in the long-term management and recovery process of individuals with schizophrenia.

This finding is supported by the study conducted by Ahmadi (2015), which found that 54.3% of respondents experienced low levels of medication adherence due to forgetting to take their medication. The study indicated that family support and

medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia have a positive and significant correlation. When patients receive support and assistance from their families, adherence to treatment tends to increase. Furthermore, Ratnawati (2016) also found a relationship between medication adherence and family support among individuals with schizophrenia, with a p-value of 0.028. Medication adherence among schizophrenia patients is highly dependent on strong family support. As the closest individuals to the patient, family members play an essential role in accompanying and assisting patients throughout the treatment process. With adequate family support, patients with schizophrenia are more likely to adhere to their medication regimen, thereby reducing the risk of relapse.

4. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that there is a significant relationship between family support and medication adherence among patients with schizophrenia in Lakudo District, Central Buton Regency, as indicated by the statistical test result with a p-value of 0.000. These findings emphasize that family support plays a crucial role in influencing the consistency of patients in following their medication regimen. Individuals with schizophrenia often experience difficulties in maintaining regular treatment due to various factors such as lack of motivation, forgetfulness, or limited understanding of the importance of continuous medication. Therefore, the presence of supportive family members becomes an essential element in ensuring that patients adhere to their treatment plans. Families are expected to actively encourage, motivate, and assist individuals with schizophrenia throughout the treatment process so that patients can consistently take their medication as prescribed by health professionals. Support from family members can take various forms, including reminding patients about their medication schedule, accompanying them during medical check-ups, providing emotional encouragement, and creating a supportive home environment. When families show concern and involvement in the treatment process, patients are more likely to feel valued and supported, which can strengthen their commitment to therapy. Ultimately, strong and continuous family support can help improve medication adherence, reduce the risk of relapse, and enhance the overall quality of life of individuals living with schizophrenia.

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