

Analysis of the Accuracy of Returning Inpatient Medical Record Files

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A B S T R A C T

This research is motivated by the importance of timely return of inpatient medical record files in supporting the smooth running of health services and administration in health facilities. The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors that influence the delay in the return of inpatient medical record files at the Community Health Center. The subjects of this study consisted of 6 people, namely 2 medical record officers, 4 inpatient officers, and the head of medical records as a triangulation source. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The results showed that the delay in the return of medical record files was influenced by factors such as the knowledge and attitudes of officers (predisposing factors), limited facilities and technical problems (enabling factors), and lack of supervision and appreciation (reinforcing factors). The conclusion of this study is that the delay in the return of files can be overcome by increasing training for officers, improving file storage facilities, and strengthening motivation and supervision from management.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, as the world's fourth most populous country, faces significant challenges in ensuring effective public services, particularly in the healthcare sector. Good healthcare services are essential to improving the quality of life, and a key element of these services is the medical records system. Medical records serve as a tool for documenting patient medical information, which plays a crucial role in maintaining the quality of healthcare services (Handayani, Nur'ilmi, and Sari, 2021). One of the facilities providing basic healthcare services in Indonesia is the Community Health Center (Puskesmas), including the Talaga Raya Community Health Center (UPTD), which provides a variety of healthcare services, including inpatient care.

In the context of inpatient care at the Puskesmas, patient medical records are documents that must be completed and managed accurately and timely. Delays in returning inpatient medical records can impact the smooth running of healthcare administration (Nugoroho et al., 2021), particularly in the BPJS (Social Security Agency) coding and claims process, and can also risk the loss or destruction of medical documents (Minister of Health Regulation No. 19 of 2024). This delay phenomenon is a significant problem that impacts the effectiveness and efficiency of healthcare services.

In health management theory, there are three main factors that influence administrative behavior in healthcare facilities: predisposing factors (knowledge and attitudes), enabling factors (infrastructure and facilities), and reinforcing factors (motivation and reinforcement through policies or SOPs). The knowledge and attitudes of medical personnel play a crucial role in medical record management, while adequate facilities and clear policies, such as standardized SOPs, can minimize delays in returning medical record files.

This research is crucial considering that timely and accurate medical record management is a crucial indicator of the quality of healthcare services in community health centers. Delays in returning medical record files can result in administrative losses and impair the efficiency of the health system (Erawantini et al., 2022). Therefore, understanding the factors causing these delays and finding appropriate solutions to address them is crucial. This research focuses on the management of inpatient medical records at the Talaga Raya Community Health Center (UPTD), a community health center with distinct characteristics and conditions compared to other community health centers. Furthermore, this study will analyze the factors causing delays in returning medical record files using a more in-depth approach, through interviews, observations, and documentation studies.

Therefore, the main objective of this study was to identify and analyze factors influencing the delay in returning inpatient medical records, including predisposing (knowledge and attitudes), enabling (facilities and facilities), and reinforcing (motivation and policies) factors, and to provide

recommendations for improving medical record return procedures in community health centers to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of health services. Based on the research conducted, it was found that the delay in returning inpatient medical records was caused by several factors, such as less than optimal knowledge of return procedures, low awareness of the importance of timeliness, and the absence of clear and consistent SOPs in the service unit. In addition, inadequate facilities, such as equipment for file management and limited network infrastructure, also contributed to this problem.

METHOD

This qualitative study, using a descriptive approach, aims to provide an in-depth description of the factors causing delays in the return of inpatient medical records at the Talaga Raya Community Health Center (Puskesmas UPTD), located on Jalan Talaga 1, Talaga 1 Village, Talaga Raya District, Central Buton Regency, Southeast Sulawesi Province. The study took place from April to June 2025.

The subjects of this study were all staff involved in managing medical records at Talaga Raya Community Health Center, including medical records officers, inpatient staff, and the head of medical records. Six subjects were recruited: two medical records officers, four inpatient staff, and the head of medical records as a triangulation source. The sample was purposive, selecting informants with direct knowledge and experience related to the return of inpatient medical records.

Data collection techniques in this study included in-depth interviews with selected subjects, direct field observations related to the medical record return process, and a documentary study involving document analysis related to the return of medical record files. The research instruments used were interview guidelines, observation checklists, and documentary studies.

Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing techniques. Data reduction involved selecting and summarizing relevant information to answer the research questions. The reduced data was then presented in a systematic narrative format for ease of understanding. Conclusions were drawn by connecting the presented data to summarize the main findings of this study.

HASIL & PEMBAHASAN (Times New Roman, point 11, Bold, Spasi 1& UPPERCASE)

This study aims to analyze the timeliness of inpatient medical record file returns at the Talaga Raya Community Health Center (Puskesmas UPTD). Based on analysis conducted through interviews, observations, and documentation studies, several factors were identified that influence the delay in medical record file returns. These factors can be grouped into three main categories: Predisposing Factors, Enabling Factors, and Reinforcing Factors.

1. Predisposing Factors (Knowledge and Attitude)

Predisposing factors are factors that exist before a behavior occurs, such as an individual's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions. In the context of this study, the predisposing factors identified include staff knowledge and attitudes in managing medical record files, which ultimately influence the timeliness of file returns. Interviews with inpatient staff, medical records officers, and heads of medical records indicated that most staff were familiar with the procedure for returning inpatient medical record files. However, although they knew that files must be returned within 2 x 24 hours of patient discharge, there was a lack of awareness regarding the importance of timely file returns. This was evident from interviews, which revealed that although staff were aware of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), they often perceived delays in file returns as having no significant impact on service (Nugoroho et al., 2021).

Inpatient staff who participated in this study stated that although they are responsible for returning medical records, they do not always prioritize this task due to other workloads. One informant stated, "We don't feel that late file returns have a significant impact on service because we still have time to find them when needed." This indicates a gap between knowledge of SOPs and attitudes and awareness regarding their implementation.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that although staff have good knowledge of procedures, attitudes and awareness regarding the importance of timely file returns remain low. According to Notoatmodjo (2010), this relates to the gap between knowledge and attitudes, which can be addressed through more intensive training and outreach regarding the importance of timely file returns to support more efficient service delivery.

2. Enabling factors (means factor)

Enabling factors are factors that support or facilitate the implementation of an action, such as existing facilities and infrastructure, and supporting systems. In this study, the supporting factors identified included the facilities at Talaga Raya Community Health Center, the system used for file management, and the workload faced by staff. Observations and interviews revealed that despite the existence of an expedition book to record file pickups and returns, and a tracer system used to facilitate file retrieval (Dewi et al., 2021), inadequate facilities still exist.

Most staff identified limited storage space as a major obstacle to returning medical records, which often leads to misplaced files. One inpatient staff member stated, "We often have difficulty finding files because the shelves are full, so some files are left on the table." This suggests that inadequate file storage facilities exacerbate the file return process, ultimately leading to delays.

Furthermore, other issues relate to the computer system used for data entry for medical record files. Several staff members revealed that computer network issues frequently occur when data entry for claims at the Medical Services, leading to delays in the file return process. One medical records officer stated, "Sometimes file returns are delayed due to slow computer networks and problems with data entry for claims."

From these findings, it can be concluded that inadequate supporting factors, such as limited storage space and technical issues with the computer system, contribute to the delay in the return of medical record files. This aligns with Notoatmodjo's (2010) theory, which states that enabling factors include facilities and systems that support desired behaviors (Handayani, Nur'ilmi, and Sari, 2021). To address this issue, the Community Health Center (Puskesmas) needs to improve file storage facilities and improve computer systems to make file retrieval more efficient.

3. Reinforcing Factors (Motivation Factors)

Reinforcing factors adalah faktor-faktor yang menguatkan atau memperkuat perilaku positif, seperti motivasi, penghargaan, dan dukungan dari pihak manajemen. Berdasarkan wawancara dengan petugas rawat inap, petugas rekam medis, dan kepala rekam medis, ditemukan bahwa motivasi untuk mengembalikan berkas tepat waktu masih sangat rendah. Salah satu masalah utama adalah tidak adanya sistem penghargaan atau insentif bagi petugas yang berhasil mengembalikan berkas tepat waktu. Selain itu, meskipun ada koordinasi antara petugas rawat inap dan rekam medis, pengawasan yang dilakukan oleh pihak manajemen masih kurang, yang mengarah pada rendahnya disiplin kerja (Hasanah, Putri and Heltiani, 2022).

An informant from the inpatient care team stated, "We've never received any recognition or reward for returning files on time." This suggests that the lack of positive reinforcement or rewards reduces staff motivation to improve their performance in returning files on time. Furthermore, despite the socialization of SOPs, the lack of consistent oversight means that file returns do not always follow procedure.

This lack of reinforcement also relates to motivational theory in behavioral theory, which states that rewards and support from superiors significantly influence employee discipline and motivation (Husin, Mursid, and Ningsih, 2024). Ineffective reinforcement factors lead to low employee motivation to return files on time. Therefore, it is crucial for management to reward employees who perform their duties well and to improve supervision and evaluation to maintain optimal performance.

4. Impact of Delays in Returning Medical Record Files

Delays in returning inpatient medical records not only disrupt administrative processes at community health centers but can also negatively impact health services. Based on interviews and observations, the most frequently cited impacts by staff were workload overload and difficulty finding files when needed. Several staff also revealed that late-returned files were often damaged or lost.

One inpatient staff member said, "If files are returned late, our workload piles up, and sometimes the files are damaged or lost." This impacts the smooth flow of services, especially when patients need their medical records for further treatment or BPJS claims. Furthermore, late file returns also lead to file duplication, which increases the administrative burden and risks increasing the workload for medical records staff (Wardina, Faizah; Rahmadiliyani, 2022).

In this regard, this study demonstrates that timely file return is crucial for supporting the smooth running of health services at community health centers (Puskesmas) and maintaining the continuity of effective administrative processes (Collins et al., 2022). As suggested by medical

records officers, a stricter monitoring system and clear rewards would be important reinforcements to encourage timely file return.

5. CLOSING

Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that the most dominant predisposing factor is the lack of awareness of officers regarding the importance of timely file returns, even though they are familiar with the existing procedures. Enabling factors such as limited storage facilities and technical problems in the file management system also worsen the file return process. In addition, ineffective reinforcing factors, such as the lack of adequate recognition or motivation from management, hinder the improvement of officer discipline and compliance in returning files on time. Therefore, improving facilities, regular training, and strengthening supervision and rewards for officers are essential to improve the management of inpatient medical record files at the Talaga Raya Community Health Center.

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