



ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Association Between Knowledge and Patients' Family Attitudes Toward Triage in the Emergency Department of Syekh Yusuf Gowa Regional General Hospital

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Emergency Department (ED) is a critical unit that plays an essential role in managing patients with emergency conditions through a triage system. However, limited knowledge among patients' families regarding triage often leads to misunderstandings that influence their attitudes toward services provided in the ED. **Objectives:** This study aimed to determine the relationship between the level of knowledge and the attitudes of patients' families toward triage in the Emergency Department of Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital, Gowa Regency. **Methods:** This study employed a quantitative design with a cross-sectional approach. The sample consisted of 72 patients' family members selected using an accidental sampling technique. The research instruments were questionnaires measuring knowledge and attitudes. Data were analyzed using univariate and bivariate analyses, with the Gamma test applied at a significance level of 0.05. **Results:** The results showed that the majority of respondents had a low level of knowledge (48.6%) and a neutral attitude (72.2%). The Gamma test yielded a coefficient value of 0.696 with a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05), indicating a statistically significant relationship between knowledge and the attitudes of patients' families toward triage. The relationship was positive and moderately strong, suggesting that higher levels of knowledge were associated with more positive attitudes toward the implementation of triage. **Conclusions:** In conclusion, there is a significant relationship between knowledge and the attitudes of patients' families toward triage in the Emergency Department of Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital, Gowa Regency. These findings are expected to serve as a basis for improving educational interventions for patients' families regarding the triage system.

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Introduction

The Emergency Department (ED) serves as the primary entry point for patients requiring immediate medical attention. Through the triage system, patients are prioritized based on the severity of their condition to ensure appropriate and timely care. As patient visits to EDs continue to increase globally, service effectiveness and efficiency



become critical [1]. Data from the United States reported 139.8 million ED visits in 2021 [2], while the United Kingdom documented a 20% increase in ED visits [3]. Globally, ED visits rose from 27,251,031 (18.1%) in 2020 to 31,241,031 (21.1%) in 2021 [4]. In Indonesia, ED visits increased from 8,597,000 (15.5%) in 2020 to 16,712,000 (28.2%) in 2022. At Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital, Gowa, daily ED visits range from 100 to 150 patients [5]. These trends highlight the importance of optimizing the triage system to maintain service quality.

Triage is a critical process in emergency care that determines patient priority based on clinical severity using specific criteria such as vital signs and initial assessment findings [6]. Proper triage implementation enhances service quality and ensures optimal resource allocation. However, family members often experience anxiety and panic in emergency situations, leading to demands for immediate service regardless of medical priority. Dissatisfaction may manifest as complaints, anger, or negative perceptions toward healthcare providers [7].

Previous studies indicate that family knowledge regarding triage significantly influences satisfaction with emergency services [8]. Variations in knowledge levels—poor (12.5%), moderate (61.1%), and good (26.4%)—demonstrate the need for improved education [8]. Lack of understanding about triage procedures can reduce satisfaction and disrupt healthcare providers' focus [9]. Anxiety related to perceived delays in treatment is frequently caused by limited information about triage standards [10]. Educational interventions such as leaflets, posters, color-coded triage labels, and direct explanations from nurses have been recommended to improve family understanding (Priyadi, 2020).

From an Islamic perspective, preserving life (*ḥifz al-nafs*) is one of the primary objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah*, emphasizing fairness and proportionality in saving lives (Fahmi et al., 2024). This principle aligns with triage, which prioritizes patients based on urgency rather than order of arrival. Providing accurate education about triage is therefore both a professional responsibility and a moral obligation.

Preliminary interviews with five ED nurses at Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital revealed that among approximately 30 triaged patients per day, only one family member understood the triage system. Limited knowledge was perceived as a contributing factor to family dissatisfaction and negative perceptions toward healthcare providers.

Based on these findings, this study aims to examine the relationship between knowledge and the attitudes of patients' families toward triage in the Emergency Department of Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital, Gowa.



Methods

This study employed a quantitative analytic correlational design with a cross-sectional approach. The research was conducted in the Emergency Department of Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital, Gowa, in August 2025. The study population consisted of all patients' family members present in the Emergency Department, with a total sample of 72 respondents selected using an accidental sampling technique.

The research instruments included a demographic data questionnaire, a knowledge questionnaire consisting of nine items, and an attitude questionnaire consisting of thirteen items adapted from Al Siyabi et al. (2024). Data were analyzed using the Gamma statistical test to examine the association between two ordinal variables. The level of statistical significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$. Ethical principles were upheld throughout the study, including respect for human dignity, privacy, and justice.

Results

The results of this study are presented in several tables to provide a comprehensive overview of the respondents' characteristics, levels of knowledge, attitudes toward triage, and the relationship between these variables.

Table 1. the demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics		
Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Female	59	81.9
Male	13	18.1
Age	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
17-25 years old (Late Adolescence)	2	2.8
26-35 years old (Early adulthood)	9	12.5
36-45 Years Old (Late Adulthood)	18	25
46-55 years old (Early elderly)	39	54.2
56-65 years old (Late Elderly)	4	5.6
Educational Background	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Elementary school	7	9.7
Junior high school	15	20.8
Senior high school	46	63.9
College	4	5.6

The majority of respondents were women (81.9%), aged 46-55 years (54.2%), with a high school education (63.9%).



The distribution of respondents' knowledge levels and attitudes toward triage is summarized in Table 2 and table 3

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Knowledge about Triage

Knowledge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Less	35	48.6
Moderate	33	45.8
Good	4	5.6

Based on Table 2, the majority of respondents had insufficient knowledge, totaling 35 respondents (48.6%), while very few respondents were in the good category, totaling 4 respondents (5.6%).

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents' Attitude about Triage

Attitude	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Negative	14	19.4
Neutral	52	72.2
Positive	6	8.3

Based on Table 4.3, most respondents showed a neutral attitude, with a total of 52 people (72.2%). Meanwhile, the smallest group was in the positive category, with only 6 people (8.3%).

Table 4. The Relationship Between Knowledge and Patient Families' Attitudes Towards Triage

Level of Knowledge	Attitude						Total	Gamma	P-value	
	Negative		Neutral		Positive					
	n	%	n	%	n	%				
Less	10	13.9	25	34.7	0	0	35	48.6	0.696	0.001
Moderate	4	5.6	26	36.1	3	4.2	33	45.8		
Good	0	0	1	1.4	3	4.2	4	5.6		

Based on Table 4 regarding the relationship between knowledge and the attitudes of patients' families towards triage in the emergency room of Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital in Gowa Regency, it is known that most respondents had insufficient knowledge, namely 35 people (48.6%). Of this group, 25 people (34.7%) showed a neutral attitude and 10 people (13.9%) showed a negative attitude towards triage. This means that out of the 35 individuals with low knowledge, nearly one-third had an attitude that was less supportive of triage implementation in the ED.

A total of 33 respondents (45.8%) had sufficient knowledge, with the majority, namely 26 people (36.1%), showing a neutral attitude, 4 people (5.6%) showing a negative attitude, and only 3 people (4.2%) showing a positive attitude. Meanwhile, of the 4 people with good knowledge, 3 people (4.2%) showed a positive attitude and 1 person (1.4%) was neutral. No negative attitudes were found in the group with good knowledge.

The results of the statistical test using Gamma showed a value of 0.696 with a p-value of 0.001, indicating a significant relationship between the level of knowledge and the attitudes of patients' families towards triage. This positive correlation shows that the better the knowledge, the better the attitude towards the implementation of triage in the emergency room.



Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the majority of patients' family members had poor knowledge of the triage system, with nearly half of the respondents categorized in the low knowledge group. This limited understanding suggests that triage is still commonly perceived as a queuing system rather than a clinical prioritization process based on the severity of a patient's condition. Similar findings have been reported by [11]), who found that the concept of triage is not widely understood among patients' families, largely due to limited educational efforts from healthcare providers. Furthermore, [12] highlighted that insufficient knowledge regarding triage implementation may lead families to perceive healthcare providers as inattentive or slow in delivering care. These findings reinforce the importance of effective communication and structured educational interventions to improve public understanding of emergency care systems.

This study also demonstrated a statistically significant and moderately strong positive association between knowledge and attitudes toward triage ($\text{Gamma} = 0.696$; $p = 0.001$). The positive direction of the relationship suggests that higher knowledge levels are associated with more supportive attitudes toward triage implementation. This finding is consistent with the study by [13], which reported that improved community knowledge was linked to more favorable attitudes toward emergency triage systems. Additionally, [14] found that providing structured triage education to families significantly increased acceptance and reduced complaints in emergency settings. From a theoretical perspective, these results support the cognitive-affective framework, where improved cognitive understanding influences emotional responses and behavioral tendencies. Therefore, enhancing family education regarding triage may serve as a strategic approach to fostering more positive attitudes and improving overall satisfaction with emergency department services.

Conclusion

This study concludes that there is a statistically significant and moderately strong positive relationship between knowledge and attitudes of patients' families regarding triage in the Emergency Department of Syekh Yusuf Regional General Hospital, Gowa. The findings indicate that families with higher levels of knowledge about the triage system tend to demonstrate more positive attitudes toward its implementation. Conversely, limited knowledge is associated with neutral or less supportive attitudes toward emergency service prioritization.

These results highlight the importance of strengthening educational interventions and communication strategies related to triage in the emergency department. Providing clear and structured information to patients' families may improve their understanding of the triage system, foster more supportive attitudes, and ultimately enhance the quality of emergency care services.



Author's Contribution Statement: Andi Aswar ; composed draft research , data collection , data analysis , and compilation report research and articles For external . Ardian Adhiwijaya; supervision and revision. Andi Budiyanto Adi Putra & Eva Yustilawati: Supervision

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