



## APPLICATION OF LEGO PLAY THERAPY TO REDUCE ANXIETY LEVELS IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN DUE TO HOSPITALIZATION

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ABSTRACT	Keywords
Anxiety is one of the responses of preschoolers who are undergoing hospitalization. Hospitalization often causes trauma to the child and sometimes makes the child cry, and refuses to cooperate during treatment. To overcome anxiety in preschoolers, The nurse's task in carrying out the intervention must consider the needs of the child in relation to his growth and progress. One of the activities to reduce anxiety in preschoolers is to provide lego play therapy. The purpose of proving EBNP by applying lego play therapy to reduce anxiety levels in preschool children in the age range of 3-6 years who are undergoing hospitalization. The design used is a descriptive method involving 3 respondents of preschool children, the instrument used is using the Preschool Anxiety Revised Scale (PASR) questionnaire. The action given is lego play therapy 6 times for 3 days with a duration of 20-30 minutes. Research shows that lego therapy affects anxiety levels in children aged 3 to 6 while they are in hospital.	<b>Preschool, Hospitalisation, Anxiety, Lego Play Therapy</b>

### INTRODUCTION

Hospitalization is a situation where a child must be hospitalized to receive treatment and treatment, causing anxiety in children and their parents (Ramdaniati et al., 2016). Hospitalization, also known as hospitalization, can generate anxiety in children due to changes in their environment and health condition (Arifin et al., 2018). When little ones are in hospital, they usually don't have the opportunity to move much and are forced to rest frequently, so this can

influence increased anxiety in children (Wijaya, 2019).

Anxiety is a feeling of fear, it is a response to external or internal stimuli in the form of emotional, behavioral, physical, and cognitive symptoms (Videbeck, 2014). Children who are sick and hospitalized often show irritability, irritability, aggression, suspicion, timidity, and anxiety easily (Hurlock, 2013). The reaction of preschool children to anxiety is that children often cry secretly because they are abandoned by their parents, have trouble sleeping, refuse to eat,

are uncooperative with health workers when they want to carry out treatment and often ask about their condition (Kaluas, 2015). The environment of a hospital is an element that affects anxiety, such as the rooms where treatments are carried out, particular smells and the use of white coats by medical staff. Other factors that affect children's anxiety are age, experience of illness and hospital treatment (Setiawati & Sundari, 2019).

Research conducted by Hidayati et al., (2021) on "The Effectiveness of Play Therapy on the Anxiety Level of Children Undergoing Hospitalization" stated that of the 30 preschool-age children who underwent hospitalization, 16 children (53.3%) experienced moderate anxiety levels, 11 children (36.7%) experienced mild anxiety levels and 2 children (6.7%) experienced severe anxiety levels, and there were 1 child (3.3%) who did not experience anxiety. One way to manage anxiety is to practice play therapy.

Play therapy is a fundamental element in a child's existence and is one of the most effective tools for dealing with stress in young patients during hospitalisation. Given that hospitalization can represent a critical event in a child's life and often brings with it excess stress, children need playful activities to express fear and anxiety, using play as a means to cope with these tensions (Setiawati & Sundari, 2019). Play therapy at preschool age emphasizes language development, the ability to equalize and differentiate, hone fine motor skills of preschool-age children, and control emotions. The selection of lego as one of the educational games because it can play a role in the intelligence and fine motor skills of preschool-age children through constructive play (Sari & Afriani, 2019).

Lego play therapy is a type of play therapy that uses toys that can be arranged and disassembled that have various shapes

such as squares, rectangles, and have serrations. Lego includes constructive games or building builds to increase intelligence and creativity in children (Tesaningrum, 2014; in Yuniati & Maryatun, 2023). The purpose of lego play therapy is to divert the child's concentration that was previously focused on the anxiety and fear due to the pain that the child feels, then the child's concentration will be able to switch to lego games because they want to complete the game on the lego arrangement. To lower anxiety in young children, it is essential to have a tool that can manifest anxiety, and one of these is play therapy with lego (Arbakyah, 2021).

Based on the results of a study conducted by Yanti et al., (2023) on "The Application of Lego Play Therapy in Reducing Anxiety Levels in Preschool-Age Children During Hospitalization in the Orchid Room of Salatiga City Hospital", after it was observed that preschool children showed reduced anxiety levels both before and after treatment with Lego play therapy.

In a study conducted by Hani et al., (2021) on "The effect of play therapy (lego) on the anxiety level of children aged 3-6 years during hospitalization in the Paradise room of RSI Banjarnegara", the results of the research on the level of anxiety in preschool children during hospitalization before being given lego play therapy were mostly moderately anxious, which was 65.8% and the level of anxiety in preschool children during hospitalization after being given lego play therapy was mostly experienced mild anxiety, which was 94.7%. There is an effect of lego play therapy on anxiety levels in preschoolers during hospitalization.

Based on the background description above, the researcher is interested in implementing the EBNP on "Application of Lego Play Therapy to Reduce Anxiety Levels in Preschool Children Due to Hospitalization".

METHOD

The case study design used is a descriptive method with the research design used, namely the Pretest Posttest One Group Design case study. In this case study, the researcher explored the problem of nursing care in preschool children who were treated in the 1st floor children's room and experienced anxiety due to hospitalization by applying lego play therapy as an

Name	Pre- Intervention	Post Interventions
An. MZ	Pre: Moderate Anxiety (57)	Post: Mild Anxiety (37)
An. N	Pre: Moderate Anxiety (65)	Post: Mild Anxiety (50)
An. R	Pre: Moderate Anxiety (63)	Post: Mild Anxiety (44)

intervention based on Evidence Based Nursing Practice to reduce anxiety due to hospitalization in the 1st floor of Dr. Kariadi Semarang Hospital, the research was conducted by interviews, observations and documentation studies, which is quantitative to apply Evidence Based Nursing Practice lego play therapy in children who experience hospitalization anxiety by monitoring the effect before and after being given lego play therapy on children's anxiety levels. The intervention was carried out for 3 days on February 19-21, 2024 to 3 (three) people with inclusion criteria: children aged 3-6 years (preschool), children who are cared for in the children's room on the 1st floor, children who experience anxiety, parents and children who are willing to be respondents and with exclusion criteria: children who have decreased consciousness, children who are bedresting, parents who are not willing to be respondents.

Sampling in this study was by Purposive Sampling. The data collected are primary data and secondary data. The instruments used in this study were: Preschool Anxiety Scale Revised (PASR) questionnaire sheet, SOP for play therapy, Lego game.

RESULTS

Table 1 Frequency of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	Presented
Man	3	100%
Woman	0	0%

Based on table 1, it is known that the respondents are male, namely 3 children (100%).

Table 2 frequency of anxiety before and after the intervention

Based on table 2, it shows that anxiety in preschool-age children during hospitalization before being given lego play therapy is experiencing moderate anxiety as many as 3 children. Meanwhile, anxiety in preschool-age children during hospitalization after being given lego play therapy decreased to mild anxiety in 3 children.

DISCUSSION

1. Overview of respondent characteristics
- The characteristics of the respondents were known to be male, namely 3 children (100%). Boys are more susceptible to a decline in the immune system due to children being more active in play. Boys prefer games with characteristics that require higher energy such as running around, climbing stairs and dirty toys such as mud, soil and water toys. Activity in play often

causes children to experience a decrease in immunity and are at risk of experiencing pain (Hidayat et al., 2021). Boys have less adaptive aspects to stressors, compared to girls. The decrease in hospitalization stress in children but hospitalization stress in boys is higher when compared to girls (Nastiti et al., 2016). This is in line with the research conducted by Hani, most of the respondents are male (52.6%).

## 2. Anxiety levels before being given play therapy

The results of the study showed that the anxiety of the three preschool-aged children aged 3-6 years during hospitalization before being given play therapy was moderate anxiety as many as 3 children. Preschool-age children are synonymous with the desire to explore something that has not been understood, so that the anxiety of preschoolers is related to everything that makes them foreign to them (Idris, 2018). In a healthy state, preschool-age children tend to be able to adapt to the environment and new friends that are appropriate to their growth and development age. When a child is sick and has to be hospitalized, an approach, attention and explanation are needed specifically to the child (Mulyanti et al., 2018). Kurniasih (2015) research said that preschool children who are cared for are easily hospitalized. Children of this age have not been able to adapt well to an uncomfortable environment. Experiences related to hospitalization provide a unique experience for preschool-age children, although normally preschool-aged children can easily adapt and relate to strangers easily. Preschoolers consider pain to be something scary so treatment and medication procedures cause mental

problems in children. Children feel that they have lost a play environment, a loving and fun family environment (Harahap, 2019).

Children's reactions to illness can include anxiety, fear of illness, lack of control in emotions, iradaptive anger and regression (Novia & Arini, 2021). Saputro and Fazrin (2017) said that anxiety in children, namely children experiencing perceived tension, causes children to become aware of the environment. Signs of anxiety are restlessness, irritability and seeking attention. This is also in line with researchers Aryani and Zaly (2021) who stated that anxiety is something that often appears in daily life can cause children to become alert and afraid. Symptoms that often occur include tension and restlessness, fear, crying.

Anxiety due to hospitalization that occurs in preschool children is a condition that can risk interfering with children's growth and development and have an impact on the healing process. Anxiety that is resolved quickly and well will make the child more comfortable and cooperative with health workers so that it does not hinder the nursing process. If the anxiety lasts for a long time and is not resolved, it will cause a detachment attitude in the child so that the child begins to not care about the surrounding environment, prefers to be silent or apathetic, refuses to be given action and the worst will cause trauma after being discharged from the hospital (Sari & Afriani, 2019). The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Ariani (2021), that the level of anxiety of preschool-age children before being given lego play therapy intervention was 26 children (74.3%).

Some changes in the physical environment during hospitalization may make the child feel unfamiliar and afraid. This will make the child feel insecure and uncomfortable. In addition, children experience physiological changes that can be seen through the signs and symptoms they experience when they are sick. The presence of injuries and pain makes the child disturbed. Preschool-aged children react to pain the same as they did when they were babies. The child will react to pain by smirking, crying, clenching teeth, biting lips, opening eyes wide, or performing aggressive actions such as kicking and punching. However, as time goes by and has been hospitalized, usually children are able to communicate the pain they experience and show the location of the pain.

### 3. Anxiety levels after being given play therapy

The results of the study after being given lego play therapy (posttest) showed that the three preschool-age children who were anxious due to hospitalization experienced a decrease in moderate anxiety levels to mild anxiety. The results of this study are in line with Laswiri (2018), namely after the Lego play therapy intervention, most preschool-age children experienced a decrease in the mild anxiety category of 16 children (84.2%). While the child is undergoing treatment in the hospital, it is necessary to play as therapy to overcome the child's anxiety and fear. Play therapy is a play activity that is carried out to help heal children and a means of continuing the growth and development of children optimally (Yanti et al., 2023).

Therefore, intervention is needed to overcome anxiety in children during

hospitalization in order to facilitate children in expressing their feelings. If children's anxiety during hospitalization can be resolved, it will support effective coping and support the smooth operation of nurses in providing nursing care. For this reason, children need a medium that can express these feelings and be able to cooperate with health workers during treatment. One of the most effective media is through play activities (Musdalipa et al., 2013).

### 4. Effect of lego play therapy on anxiety levels

The results of the research on the level of anxiety before being given Lego play therapy to An. MZ with a score of 57 anxiety is moderate, in An. N with a score of 65 his anxiety is moderate and An.R with a score of 63 his anxiety is moderate. Then an intervention was given Lego play therapy on An. MZ with a score of 37, An. N with a score of 50 and An.R with a score of 44 are included in the mild anxiety category. Based on table 2, it can be concluded that the provision of lego play therapy is significant in reducing the level of anxiety in preschool-aged children at Dr. Kariadi Semarang Hospital.

The level of anxiety in preschool-aged children who undergo hospitalization has decreased from those who experience moderate anxiety to mild anxiety. These results are in line with the research of Mujiyanti & Rismawati (2019) that there is an influence between anxiety levels before and after lego play therapy is carried out. Research conducted by Israeli et al., (2020) shows that play therapy has the ability to reduce anxiety and tension in children.

To help children cope with anxiety during hospitalization, it is essential to adopt a method based on the philosophy

of atraumatic care. This atraumatic approach represents a type of support offered by health professionals to children within health services, with particular attention to interventions that can decrease the physical stress and emotional distress experienced by young patients and their parents. Efforts for nurses and health workers to minimize the impact on the hospitalization period in preschool-aged children can be done with play therapy techniques (Arbakyah, 2021).

Play is a crucial role in the mental, emotional and social health of young people. As with their growth needs, the need to have fun does not stop even when children are ill or hospitalized (Savitri et al., 2018). Play therapy is believed to be able to eliminate limitations, obstacles in oneself, stress, frustration and have emotional problems with the aim of changing the child's inappropriate behavior into expected behavior and the child who is often invited to play will be more cooperative and easy to cooperate with during the treatment period (Hasnita & Sherly, 2018).

Play therapy at preschool age emphasizes language development, the ability to equalize and differentiate, hone fine motor skills of preschool-age children, and control emotions (Sari & Afriani, 2019). Actions to reduce anxiety in preschool children are, with play therapy and cooperation with good parents, so that it can minimize or reduce stress in children who are hospitalized. One of the play therapies that can be used to reduce anxiety in children due to hospitalization is lego games (Arbakyah, 2021).

Lego games are games that spur children's creativity, toys made from small blocks of colored plastic that can

be assembled into different configurations such as vehicles, buildings, planes or locomotives (Soebachman, 2012). Playing with lego can also divert the concentration of children who were previously focused on anxiety and fear due to their illness, then the child's concentration will be able to switch to lego games because they want to complete the arrangement of the lego. This playful experience includes easy techniques for coping with anxiety, such as relaxation and focusing on something else, which are effective in decreasing anxiety during nursing practices, thus promoting collaborative behavior during the action (Mujiyanti & Ris, 2019).

## CONCLUSIONS

Anxiety in the three preschool children aged 3 – 6 years during hospitalization before being given lego play therapy experienced anxiety in the moderate anxiety category, after being given lego play therapy, the three children experienced a decrease in anxiety to mild anxiety. There is an effect of lego play therapy on anxiety levels in children aged 3 – 6 years during hospitalization. The limitations at the time of implementation were that the application was only carried out to 3 respondents with the age criteria of 3 – 6 years, the same gender of respondents was carried out on boys, and the limited number of cases taken.

It is anticipated that the results of this research will help decrease anxiety through the use of Lego play therapy as a complementary non-pharmacological approach. Furthermore, it is hoped that future researchers can further improve this study by including more participants and cases, and by implementing control or comparison groups, as nurses and hospitals could develop standard operating procedures



to lower anxiety levels in hospitalized children between 3-6 years by administering Lego play therapy for 20-30 minutes twice a day for three days. In all three cases, there was a decrease in anxiety levels from the moderate anxiety category to mild anxiety.

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