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Strategies to Improve Service Quality in Improving Accessibility at the Pulo Brayan Health Center

Wirdah Muhammad Syukri Alghiffary[1], Dewi Agustina[1], Delfriana Ayu Astuty[1]

[1]Faculty of Public Health, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Accessibility of health services is an important aspect in providing quality primary health services at the Health Center. However, limited infrastructure, human resources, and service management continue to pose challenges to improving service quality. This study aims to analyze strategies to improve service quality to improve the accessibility of health services at the Pulo Brayan Health Center. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques, consisting of the Head of the Health Center, general practitioners, and patients as service users. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the strategy to improve service quality is implemented through the implementation of standard operating procedures (SOPs), the use of the JKN Mobile application to facilitate registration, the division of tasks of health workers according to competencies, the provision of priority services for vulnerable groups, and the strengthening of therapeutic communication and patient education. Even so, there are still a number of challenges, such as limited facilities and health workers, low public awareness of routine health check-ups, communication barriers, and relatively long waiting times for services. This study concludes that the implementation of integrated service strategies supported by the use of digital technology and patient-centered services, contributes to increased accessibility of healthcare services. However, further strengthening of facilities, human resources, and public education is still needed to optimize the quality of services at the Health Center.

Keywords: service quality, health service accessibility, service strategy, health center.

Correspondence:
Wirdah Muhammad Syukri Alghiffary
Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara Medan
Email address
wirdahmuhammadsyukrialghiffary@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Health is a state of physical, mental, and social well-being in which a person is safe and free from disease. Health is a fundamental human right recognized by the World Health Organization or *World Health Organization,* and it is very important that every individual can participate fully in social life and achieve their full potential and life goals (World Health Organization, 2023).

In Indonesia, the health service system is organized in stages consisting of first, second, and third-level health services. First-level health services are the main entrance for the community to obtain basic health services, most of which are organized through Community Health Centers (Puskesmas). Puskesmas have a strategic role in providing health services that are easily accessible to the community, especially in promotive and preventive efforts to improve the quality of public health as a whole (Kementerian Kesehatan, 2024).

Along with increasing public awareness of the importance of health, the demand for the quality of health services is also getting higher. The community not only needs available health services, but also services that are quality, easily accessible, and able to provide satisfaction for service users. According to Fuadah et al (2025) Improving the quality of health services at first-level health facilities is an increasingly important demand in the health service system in Indonesia. First-level health facilities such as health centers have a strategic role in providing basic health services to the community so that the quality of services provided greatly affects the level of satisfaction and public trust in government health services. Research shows that good quality of health services can increase patient satisfaction and encourage more optimal utilization of health services.

The quality of health services at the health center can be seen from various aspects, such as the timeliness of services, the friendly attitude of health workers, the availability of medical personnel, and the completeness of service facilities and infrastructure. Research conducted at the Kabanjahe Health Center shows that the quality of good health services is characterized by timely service, friendliness of officers, and the availability of medical personnel and adequate health facilities so that they are able to provide comfort for the community in obtaining health services (Siahaan & Purwanti, 2025).

However, various studies also show that there are still a number of obstacles in the implementation of health services at health centers, such as limited human resources, inadequate facilities, and the high number of patient visits that cause longer waiting times for services. This condition often causes complaints from the community so that there are efforts to improve the quality of service in a sustainable manner (Ningrum & Oktariyanda, 2023). This condition shows that improving the quality of health services does not only depend on policies, but also on the readiness of facilities and resources owned by each health center.

In addition, access to health services is also an important factor related to the quality of services at first-level health facilities. Several studies show that limited health facilities, uneven distribution of health workers, and geographical barriers can affect people's access to optimal health services. Therefore, improving the quality of health services does not only focus on the aspect of medical services, but also includes efforts to increase the accessibility of health services for the community (Rahmayani, 2023). These conditions can have an impact on service efficiency, patient waiting time, and the quality of interaction between health workers and the public as service users.

Although various studies have addressed service quality and healthcare accessibility at Community Health Centers (Puskesmas), most have examined these aspects in isolation and relied predominantly on quantitative approaches. Consequently, a research gap remains regarding service quality improvement strategies that contribute to enhanced healthcare accessibility. The novelty of this study lies in its use of a qualitative approach to explore service quality improvement strategies at the Pulo Brayan Community Health Center in depth, thereby making a scholarly contribution through a more comprehensive understanding that can serve as a foundation for efforts to improve primary healthcare quality.

This phenomenon can also be found at the Pulo Brayan Health Center, which still faces several limitations in the implementation of health services. Based on initial observations, the relatively small health center building causes service spaces to be limited so that some rooms feel cramped when used for health service activities. In addition, the available drug storage space

(pharmaceutical warehouse) is also considered inadequate, so some drug boxes must be placed outside the warehouse space. This condition causes drug storage to look less organized and has the potential to disrupt the neatness and effectiveness of drug management at health centers.

In addition to the limited physical facilities, the number of workers or health workers available at the health center is also still relatively limited compared to the high needs of community services. The shortage of health workers can have an impact on the increasing workload of officers and potentially affect the speed and quality of services provided to the community. This condition shows that there is still a gap between the demand to improve the quality of health services and the real condition of the facilities and resources available at the health center.

Based on these conditions, the right strategy is needed to improve the quality of health services so that the accessibility of services for the community can continue to be improved. Therefore, research on strategies to improve service quality in increasing the accessibility of health services at the Pulo Brayan Health Center is important to be carried out to identify existing problems and formulate improvement efforts that can support more optimal health services for the community.

METHODS

The research method uses a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategy to improve the quality of services aimed at improving the accessibility of health services at the Pulo Brayan Health Center. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an exploration of the experiences, perceptions, and views of informants related to the implementation of health services.

Informants were selected using a purposive sampling method which was carried out by considering certain criteria that had been set by the researcher in accordance with the characteristics of the previously known population consisting of the Head of the Health Center, general practitioners, health workers, and patients or the community who met the research criteria. The selection of informants aims to allow researchers to obtain in-depth information on strategies to improve service quality in improving the accessibility of health services at health centers. The inclusion criteria for healthcare workers require a minimum of one year of work experience and direct involvement in patient care, while the selected patient is a service user who is willing to be an informant. Data collection continues until the information obtained from the interviews begins to repeat itself and no new answers, opinions, or themes emerge. This condition is known as data saturation, which is where the researcher no longer obtains additional information that is different from the next informant.

Data collection used three techniques, namely in-depth interviews, direct observations, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using guidelines compiled based on research objectives. This guide covers various aspects, such as strategies to improve service quality, accessibility of health services, challenges in implementation, and efforts made to improve service quality. Each interview lasts approximately 30–60 minutes, after the informant has given consent to participate in the research. Observations are focused on facilities and infrastructure, service workflows, and health service delivery processes. Documentation is obtained from SOPs, service-related documents, and other relevant sources.

RESULTS

Planning strategies in Improving Service Accessibility

Interviews with the Head of the Pulo Brayan Health Center revealed that service accessibility is improved through a structured service planning system covering the entire patient

journey, from registration to completion of treatment or referral. The health center has established standard operating procedures (SOPs) and service flow guidelines that are implemented by all healthcare personnel. Staff are assigned to service units according to their professional roles and responsibilities to ensure an orderly service process.

The health center also utilizes the Mobile JKN application, allowing patients to register before arriving or upon arrival at the facility. According to the informants, this digital registration system has helped streamline administrative procedures and reduce patient waiting times. Furthermore, continuous education and training are provided to healthcare workers to maintain service quality and ensure friendly and responsive patient care.

Efforts to Increase Accessibility for Vulnerable Groups

The interviews indicated that the health center prioritizes vulnerable populations, including older adults, pregnant women, and people with disabilities. Pregnant women receive home visits conducted by dedicated health teams, while elderly patients and individuals with disabilities are provided with priority services upon arrival at the health center.

Special personnel are assigned to assist vulnerable patients throughout the service process, ensuring easier access to healthcare services and reducing administrative barriers.

Implementation of Health Service Programs

According to the Head of the Health Center, health service programs are implemented based on national policies established by the Medan City Health Office. Programs include maternal and child health services, tuberculosis control, and chronic disease management program. Each program is managed by designated healthcare personnel according to their respective professional competencies.

Program implementation follows annual targets established by the Health Office, with responsibilities distributed among healthcare workers according to their respective fields of expertise.

The Role of Health Workers in Improving Service Quality

General practitioners reported that improving service quality involves not only providing medical treatment but also demonstrating patience, empathy, and effective communication with patients. Doctors routinely explain patients' diagnoses, treatment plans, and prescribed medications to improve patient understanding of their health conditions.

Healthcare providers emphasized the importance of creating a comfortable atmosphere during consultations and ensuring that patients fully understand the information provided before leaving the consultation room.

Obstacles in Increasing the Accessibility of the Pulo Brayan Health Center

Both the Head of the Health Center and general practitioners identified several barriers to improving service accessibility. One major challenge is low public awareness regarding preventive healthcare and routine medical check-ups, particularly among patients with chronic diseases who frequently fail to attend scheduled follow-up visits or adhere to medication regimens.

Resource limitations were also reported, including shortages of healthcare personnel and infrastructure, with additional resources depending on annual approval from the Medan City Health Office. Furthermore, communication barriers were identified, particularly among elderly

patients and individuals who primarily speak local languages, making health education more time-consuming and sometimes less effective.

DISCUSSION

Planning Strategies to Improve Service Accessibility

The establishment of standardized service procedures and clearly defined service flows demonstrates systematic efforts to improve healthcare accessibility. Accessibility encompasses not only physical access to healthcare facilities but also simplified administrative procedures, efficient service delivery, and reduced waiting times. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that structured service systems contribute to improved healthcare quality and patient satisfaction (Mentari & Susilawati, 2022).

The implementation of the Mobile JKN application represents an important digital innovation for improving administrative efficiency. However, the effectiveness of digital health services depends largely on patients' digital literacy. Older adults and individuals with limited technological skills may experience difficulties using digital platforms. Therefore, maintaining conventional registration systems alongside digital services remains essential to ensure equitable healthcare access. This finding supports previous research indicating that successful digital transformation requires both technological readiness and adequate user capacity (Nurhidayah et al., 2023).

Improving Accessibility for Vulnerable Groups

Priority services for vulnerable populations reflect the principles of equitable primary healthcare. Home visits for pregnant women further demonstrate the implementation of promotive and preventive healthcare approaches, which are central functions of primary healthcare facilities. These findings are consistent with WHO recommendations emphasizing that vulnerable populations require additional support to overcome barriers to healthcare access.

Although service prioritization has been implemented, accessibility could be further enhanced through improvements in physical infrastructure, including wheelchair-accessible pathways, handrails, accessible toilets, and elderly-friendly waiting areas. Sustainable outreach programs and adequate staffing are also necessary to maintain effective services for vulnerable populations (Rukmini et al., 2022).

Implementation of Health Service Programs

The implementation of national health programs indicates strong alignment between local primary healthcare services and national health policies. Assigning healthcare personnel according to professional competencies facilitates program coordination and improves organizational efficiency.

Nevertheless, the findings suggest that program planning remains largely focused on national priorities without sufficient adaptation to local community health needs. Community-based planning informed by local epidemiological data could enhance program relevance and effectiveness in addressing specific health problems within the health center's service area.

Role of Health Workers in Improving Service Quality

The findings highlight the importance of therapeutic communication and patient-centered care in improving healthcare quality. Beyond clinical competence, healthcare providers' communication skills contribute substantially to patient trust, satisfaction, and adherence to

treatment recommendations. These findings support WHO's framework emphasizing patient-centered care as a fundamental component of healthcare quality (Arif et al., 2022).

However, effective communication may be compromised by excessive workloads, limited consultation time, and shortages of healthcare personnel. Addressing these systemic challenges is therefore essential for sustaining high-quality patient-centered services.

Barriers to Improving Service Accessibility

The study identified both demand-side and supply-side barriers to healthcare accessibility. On the demand side, limited health literacy and poor adherence to routine health monitoring reduce the effectiveness of healthcare services despite their availability. Continuous health education is therefore essential to encourage preventive healthcare behaviors.

On the supply side, shortages of healthcare workers, inadequate facilities, and dependence on government resource allocation constrain service capacity. Communication barriers, particularly among elderly patients and those with limited proficiency in the national language, further reduce service efficiency and prolong consultation times. Similar challenges have been reported in previous studies of primary healthcare services in Indonesia (Swandarini et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the strategy to improve the quality of services at the Pulo Brayan Health Center is implemented through the implementation of a standardized service system, the use of the Mobile JKN application, priority services for vulnerable groups, and the strengthening of communication and education by health workers. The strategy contributes to increasing the accessibility of health services for the community. However, limitations in facilities and infrastructure, human resources, and public health literacy continue to pose significant challenges. The findings of this study are the basis for the development of strategies to improve the quality of services at health centers, especially through strengthening infrastructure and capacity of health workers, as well as sustainable community education.

RECOMMENDATION

The findings of this study suggest that improving healthcare accessibility at primary healthcare facilities requires a comprehensive approach that integrates organizational, technological, and community-based strategies. Health centers should strengthen human resource capacity through adequate workforce planning, continuous professional training, and equitable task distribution to reduce service delays and improve service efficiency. Investment in healthcare infrastructure and supporting facilities is also essential to ensure that services can be delivered effectively and comfortably for all patients.

Furthermore, expanding the utilization of digital health technologies, such as the JKN Mobile application, should be accompanied by public education and technical assistance to increase digital literacy and encourage broader community adoption. Health promotion activities should also be intensified to improve public awareness of preventive healthcare and routine health check-ups. In addition, strengthening communication skills among healthcare providers through regular training in patient-centered communication may help overcome communication barriers and improve patient satisfaction.

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