

Exploring the Filipino geriatric patients' caring encounters during their hospitalization: Basis for improving geriatric care

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ISSN: 2243-7770

Online ISSN: 2243-7789

Received: 28 May 2025

Revised: 20 June 2025

Accepted: 23 June 2025

OPEN ACCESS

Available Online: 25 June 2025

DOI: 10.5861/ijrsm.2025.25077

Abstract

This study aimed to explore the Filipino geriatric patients' caring encounters during their hospitalization which will serve as basis for improving geriatric care. This employed a phenomenological research design, specifically targeting a diverse group of ten (10) geriatric patients aged 60 and above at the Aglipay District Hospital. The use of open-ended questions, as outlined in the attached research questionnaire, aimed to encourage participants to share rich and detailed narratives about their experiences. Coding and thematic analysis were used to analyze the data. The experiences of geriatric patients during hospitalization revealed that compassionate care, effective communication, and the presence of dedicated healthcare providers significantly impact their overall well-being. From the standpoint of geriatric patients, cleanliness, attentive personnel, and a supporting environment are critical components of caring encounters. To improve the geriatric patients' caring encounters during their hospitalization, healthcare professionals should be trained effectively in communicating with geriatric patients. This will ensure that information about drugs, treatment plans, and patient progress is communicated understandably and engagingly. Training on cultural sensitivity in staff development initiatives should be included to guarantee that patients are treated with dignity and compassion, considering their varied backgrounds and communication styles.

Keywords: caring encounters, geriatric care, geriatric patients, negative experiences, positive experiences

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1. Introduction

Globally, it is anticipated that the older adult population will experience a rapid increase leading to a corresponding rise in hospitalization rates due to the aging demographic. Hospitalization is identified as a significant risk factor for the loss of independence among older adults, with at least 34% experiencing a decline in independence related to basic activities of daily living (ADL) during their hospital stay (Chase et al., 2018; Surkan et al., 2018). The concept of self-care, defined as “any self-initiated or self-directed action of engaging in activities of daily living and other activities to preserve bio-psycho- social “well-being,” is crucial for older patients during their hospital stay (Chan et al., 2020). Healthcare professionals play a vital role in supporting and promoting patients' ability to engage in self-care. The intention and active participation of patients in self-care have been identified as crucial factors influencing their overall recovery and well-being. Notably, a higher intention for self-care has shown positive correlations with motor recovery in post-stroke patients, indicative of improved functional outcomes (Armijo-Olivo et al., 2017). Realizing patients' self-care goals during hospitalization predicts their perceived overall improvement (Sun et al., 2019), and in the long term, self-care in the inpatient setting is associated with a lower likelihood of 30- day hospital readmission in older adults (Koch et al., 2020). The loss of self-care abilities during hospitalization has been linked to decreased functional recovery, increased morbidity and mortality rates, and a significant reduction in patients' well-being and quality of life (Lewandowska et al., 2020; Vidán et al., 2019). This decline in self-care abilities may also contribute to a higher cost of care, increased dependence on caregivers, and the potential institutionalization of older adults (Akhter-Khan, 2021).

Caring for geriatric patients poses unique challenges for nurses, as many elderly individuals depend on assistance with activities of daily living. Geriatric nurses often find themselves attending to fundamental human activities, including caring for cognitively impaired geriatric patients, which adds to their workload (Roitenberg, 2021). Existing studies, as highlighted by Halter et al. (2017), emphasized the challenging aspects of the nursing profession, including high vacancy and turnover rates, with fewer studies focusing on the personal aspects of being a nurse (Gillet et al., 2018). Past research has predominantly explored job satisfaction and stress among registered nurses in hospital settings. Globally, the aging population is posing a challenge to healthcare systems, especially in nations with overstretched infrastructure like the Philippines. According to projections, the proportion of the elderly population is expected to increase significantly by 2032, which will call for immediate changes in the standard of care given to older persons. Locally, organizations such as the Gerontology Nurses Association of the Philippines (GNAP) have responded to this challenge by advocating for specialized geriatric care training programs to enhance the competencies of healthcare providers working with older adults. GNAP has spearheaded several initiatives focusing on building a well-prepared nursing workforce to cater to the unique needs of elderly patients. These initiatives align with global efforts to redesign healthcare for the aging population by fostering better care delivery and promoting patient-centered models.

Given these trends, the present study explores geriatric patients' hospitalization experiences in a Philippine context, aiming to understand the factors contributing to positive and negative care encounters. Through this, the study will examine the role of communication, cultural sensitivity, and the availability of geriatric-focused facilities in improving overall care outcomes for elderly patients. Additionally, by incorporating knowledge from regional groups like GNAP and current models, the study would offer doable solutions to improve the standard of care for elderly patients in Philippine hospitals. This will help healthcare practitioners continue their efforts better to fulfill the escalating needs of an older society. This phenomenological study aims to delve into the lived experiences of Filipino geriatric patients about their caring encounters at Aglipay District Hospital, Aglipay, Quirino. The study's findings can serve as foundational insights for proposing interventions/measures to improve

the experiences of geriatric patients and promote positive care experiences leading to satisfaction with care, and an improvement in their well-being.

Objectives of the Study - The primary objective of this study was to explore the caring encounters experienced by geriatric patients during their hospitalization at Aglipay District Hospital, with the goal of using these insights as a basis for improving geriatric care. Specifically, the study aimed to understand how geriatric patients describe their caring experiences while hospitalized, identify the factors that contribute to both positive and negative encounters, and determine the essential elements that patients consider vital in a caring hospital environment. Furthermore, the study sought to gather suggestions based on patients' lived experiences to enhance the overall quality of care provided to geriatric patients during their hospital stay.

2. Methods

Research Design - In this study, a phenomenological research design was carefully selected to delve deeply into the multifaceted lived experiences of Filipino geriatric patients throughout their hospitalization and their interactions with healthcare providers. Phenomenology is not merely a suitable choice for this investigation; it is an exceptionally well-suited approach due to its unique ability to uncover and interpret the fundamental essence of human experiences. By employing phenomenological reflection to delve into the lived experiences of older adults, our study seeks to make a substantial contribution to our understanding of the aging process. The phenomenological research design adopted for this study served as a methodological vehicle for a comprehensive examination of the experiences encountered by geriatric patients during their hospital stays. It aimed to shed light not only on the richness and complexity of these experiences, but also on how they interconnect with and contribute to the broader narrative of the aging journey. Through this research, the researcher hopes to gain profound insights into the essence of geriatric care and the implications it holds for the well-being and quality of life of older adults in the Filipino context.

Population, Sampling Size, and Sampling Method - The study employed a purposive sampling strategy, specifically targeting a diverse group of ten (10) geriatric patients aged 60 and above at the Aglipay District Hospital. According to Creswell et al. (2018), an estimate between 10 and 50 participants as being sufficient for qualitative studies. Patients facing functional difficulties, such as mental incapacitation, or similar conditions, will be excluded from the research study. While the research's primary goal was to ensure representation across various demographic factors, including age groups, health conditions, and lengths of hospitalization, there is a concern that the collected data might be influenced or misinterpreted due to the patients' inability to perceive verbal and non-verbal cues from healthcare providers. In cases where hearing impairment was a concern, the researcher invited sign language interpreter to gather data from the respondent. To initiate the sampling process, the researcher collaborated with the hospital's data registry department to access a list of eligible geriatric patients. This step was carried out in strict accordance with the hospital's established procedures and protocols to protect patient privacy and adhere to ethical guidelines.

Instrument of the Study - The primary data collection method for this study revolved around semi-structured interviews, thoughtfully designed to delve into the experiences, perceptions, and emotions of Filipino geriatric patients during their hospitalization. This approach was chosen because it provides a platform for participants to articulate their encounters comprehensively and meaningfully. The use of open-ended questions, as outlined in the attached research questionnaire, aimed to encourage participants to share rich and detailed narratives about their experiences. This approach was particularly valuable when exploring nuanced and multifaceted topics such as caring encounters during hospitalization. The interview questions within the questionnaire have been meticulously crafted to align with the study's research objectives. These objectives aimed to uncover the experiences of Filipino geriatric patients during their hospitalization, identify the factors that contribute to positive and negative caring encounters, and ultimately develop recommendations for enhancing the quality of care for this demographic. Each question was accompanied by probing questions that encourage participants to provide in-depth insights into their interactions with healthcare providers, the impact of

cultural sensitivity, and their overall care experiences. The thoroughness and specificity of these questions aim to ensure a comprehensive exploration of the subject matter, ultimately contributing valuable insights to the field of healthcare and geriatric patient care.

To validate the instrument, the following were used:

Validity of Content. Three-panel members with backgrounds in qualitative research and geriatric care were contacted to guarantee the interview guide's content validity. Experts evaluated questions to determine if they were adequate, pertinent, and thorough enough to satisfy the study's goal of comprehending the compassionate interactions that Filipino elderly patients had with hospital staff. Interview guide was revised in light of the experts' input. Additional prompts were included to collect culturally distinctive caregiving experiences, especially those that reflected Filipino values, and some of the questions were reworded to improve clarity.

Pilot Testing. Two elderly Filipino patients not involved in the primary trial participated in a pilot study where the updated interview guide was tested. This pilot test aimed to ensure that the participants could give insightful, in-depth answers and that the questions were straightforward. The interview guide had a few minor revisions in response to the findings of the pilot interviews. The final instrument was designed to be both user-friendly and successful in eliciting deep insights. To make the questions more accessible to senior participants, for instance, several complicated or perplexing terminology were rephrased.

Face Validity. To augment validity, participant input was directly gathered to evaluate face validity. Following the interviews, the participants were questioned about whether the questions had allowed them to completely describe their experiences and whether any significant details of their hospital stay had been missed. According to the response, the questions promoted in-depth contemplation on their compassionate experiences in the hospital and were straightforward and pertinent. This confirmed that the tool was appropriate for recording the actual experiences of elderly Filipino patients while they were in the hospital.

Reflexivity and Iterative Refinement. The researcher was reflexive throughout the data-gathering process, considering how her own biases may affect the findings. This was carried out in order to guarantee the instrument's impartiality and accuracy. The interview guide was continually improved based on preliminary interviews. Furthermore, cultural sensitivity was given top importance during this process, focusing on Filipino values like respect for elders and *utang na loob* (debt of gratitude).

Data Gathering Procedure - The following steps were undertaken by the researcher: The researcher formulated the research proposal and the instrument and submitted it to the adviser, Dean, and Research Director for checking. After the research proposal was checked, the researcher incorporated all the suggestions for the improvement of the study. Then, the researcher wrote a letter to the authorities for the permission to implement the study. Once approved, the researcher drafted a letter to the Chief of Hospital allowing her to conduct the interviews to the identified participants. The purpose of the study was explained to the identified participants. Also, their right to refuse as a respondent was highlighted. The researcher requested daily census at the Emergency Room Department to identify the participants of the study. An interview was conducted through audio recording and the purpose of the study was explained to the identified participants. The gathered data were collated and subjected to thematic analysis. Findings, interpretation, conclusion, and suggestions were drawn from the data acquired. To validate the result, the researcher conducted member checking with the identified participants to confirm the findings.

Data Analysis - Coding and thematic analysis served as the chosen method for the researcher to identify patterns, themes, and underlying meanings within the collected data. This approach seamlessly aligns with the phenomenological design, which places a central emphasis on capturing the essence of individuals' experiences and discerning common threads shared among participants. Furthermore, the adoption of thematic analysis greatly facilitated the exploration of geriatric patients' narratives concerning their care experiences. Through a meticulous and systematic coding process, the researcher was able to pinpoint recurring themes and discern

patterns within their descriptions. This method provided a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how these patients perceive and articulate their experiences, encompassing facets such as emotional support, physical care, and communication with healthcare providers. Importantly, it also empowered the researcher to identify the factors influencing the quality of caring encounters, as perceived by geriatric patients. Moreover, thematic analysis provided the researcher with the invaluable capability to distill the core elements that geriatric patients prioritize in their caring encounters. Recognizing recurring themes within their descriptions, the researcher was able to compile a comprehensive list of essential components contributing to a positive hospitalization experience. This wealth of information furnished valuable insights into the specific needs and preferences of geriatric patients, thereby aiding in the development of patient-centered care approaches. This method involves independently revisiting the collected papers, generating codes and themes, which was subsequently deliberated upon through the construction of a "thematic map."

Ethical Considerations - The ethical conduct of this study is of paramount importance, and it rigorously adhered to established guidelines and principles to safeguard the rights and well-being of all participants involved. Here, the researcher delved into the specific ethical considerations and procedures that were implemented:

Informed Consent. Prior to the commencement of the study, all potential participants were provided with clear and comprehensive information about the research's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits. They had the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarifications. Informed consent was obtained voluntarily and without any form of coercion. Participants were assured that their decision to participate or withdraw will have no impact on their medical care or any other aspect of their relationship with the healthcare facility. Written consent was obtained from each participant, and a copy was provided to them for their records.

Confidentiality. The confidentiality of all collected data was strictly maintained. Participants' identities were protected, and any personally identifiable information was anonymized or pseudonymized in the research reports and publications. Data were stored securely, with access restricted to only authorized research personnel. When presenting findings, care was taken to ensure that no individual can be identified from the information shared.

Right to Withdraw. Participants were explicitly informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point, without any adverse consequences. This principle of respect for autonomy means that participants can decide to discontinue their participation for any reason, and data will be withdrawn from analysis without question.

Beneficence. Throughout the research process, the principle of beneficence was upheld. This means that every effort was made to maximize the benefits of the study for the participants and society while minimizing any potential harm. This includes ensuring that participants' experiences are respected, that the research contributes to improving the quality of care for geriatric patients, and that any potential risks are mitigated.

Respect for Autonomy. The autonomy of each participant was highly respected. This principle involves acknowledging that individuals have the right to make decisions about their own participation and that their choices will be honored without judgment. Additionally, the researcher was transparent in explaining the purpose and process of the study, empowering participants to make informed choices.

3. Results and discussion

3.1 Part 1. Geriatric Patients' Caring Experiences During Hospitalization

After a rigorous thematic analysis of the texts and voice recordings of the responses of the respondents, the researcher came up with the following themes answering the first objective of the current study. These themes include *positive experiences of care, emotional impact on hospital experience, negative experiences and challenges, importance of communication and cultural sensitivity, and areas for improvement.*

Positive Experiences of Care: “Maalaga Sila” (They are careful) - Most participants shared that their experiences in the hospital were generally positive. Common themes included prompt attention to medical needs, compassionate and caring healthcare staff, and a sense of comfort and security. Patients expressed satisfaction with the way they were treated, highlighting the staff's dedication to their well-being. Many used descriptors like “very good,” “*maalaga sila*,” and “*napintas ti serbisyo da*” (excellent service). Specific examples of positive experiences included the staff's constant follow-up, attentive behaviors, and clear communication about medications and progress. The participants emphasized how small gestures, like staff smiling and consistently checking in on their condition, contributed to their sense of being well- cared for. One patient mentioned, “*They always smile and greet us well*,” while another noted, “*Staff are very compassionate, and they readily attend to our needs*.” These actions made patients feel respected and valued, contributing to a positive experience.

Emotional Impact on Hospital Experience: “Panatag ang Loob Ko” (I feel comfortable) - Emotions played a significant role in shaping the patients' hospital experiences. The majority described comfort, contentment, and security during their stay. One patient noted, “*Panatag ang loob ko dito*” (I feel at ease here), while another shared, “*Comforted and well-cared for*.” These emotions positively impacted their perceptions of care, with several patients stating that they would choose Aglipay District Hospital again if they needed to be hospitalized. The comfort and care extended by healthcare providers helped improve patients' overall health and well-being, with one participant stating, “*It contributed a lot to my first recovery/healing*.” This was significant for geriatric patients, who are often more vulnerable and need consistent reassurance during hospitalization.

Communication and Cultural Sensitivity: “Pinagsarita da kanyami” (How they communicate with us) - Communication was key factor influencing the quality of care. Participants appreciated when healthcare providers took time to explain medical conditions and treatments in a way they could understand. One patient shared, “*Medication is explained well, and they attend to our needs readily*.” Effective communication fostered trust between patients and healthcare providers, reinforcing sense of being well-cared for. Cultural sensitivity also played a role in the patients' experiences, as many noted how important it was for healthcare providers to respect and understand their cultural values. One participant expressed appreciation for the staff's ability to speak the local dialect, saying, “*Nu anya ajay sao mi ket isu met ti pinagsarita da kanyami*” (They speak to us in the language we understand). This cultural connection helped ease communication barriers and made patients feel more comfortable and respected during their stay.

Negative Experiences and Challenges: “Kulang ang Tubig” (The water supply is lacking) - While most feedback was positive, some patients highlighted areas where care fell short, particularly concerning hospital facilities. The condition of the hospital's comfort rooms (CR) and water supply were frequently mentioned as negative aspects of their experience. For example, one participant said, “*Medyo luma na ang CR at kulang ang tubig*” (The restroom is a bit old, and the water supply is lacking), and others echoed similar sentiments about the inadequacy of the facilities. Several participants suggested improvements to enhance the quality of care for geriatric patients. One of the main recommendations was to upgrade the hospital's facilities, particularly the comfort rooms and water supply, to better meet the needs of elderly patients. Participants also recommended increasing the number of healthcare staff to ensure more consistent attention and creating a dedicated room for geriatric patients for a more focused and specialized approach to care. Maintaining good communication and continuing regular visits from healthcare providers were emphasized as critical factors for improving care. Participants expressed that consistent communication about their condition and treatment gave them a sense of control and comfort during their hospital stay. Although these issues did not detract significantly from the overall care provided by the healthcare staff, participants indicated that improving these aspects would enhance their comfort and overall experience in the hospital.

3.2 Part 2. Factors Contributing to Positive and Negative Caring Encounters for Geriatric Patients during their Hospitalization

Five key themes emerged as the factors contributing to positive and negative caring encounters for geriatric

patients during their hospitalization. These include positive interactions with healthcare staff, effective communication, impact of staff fatigue, lack of respect, and ineffective communication.

Table 1

Summary of the Positive and Negative Caring Encounters of the Geriatric Patients during their Hospitalization in Aglipay District Hospital

Encounters	Type	Supporting Quotes
Effective Communication	Positive	"Pinapaliwanag ng maigi kung ano ang sakit namin" (<i>We are receiving a thorough explanation of our medical condition</i>)
Attentive and Compassionate Staff	Positive	"Mababait mga nurses at doctor." (<i>The nurses and doctors are all very kind</i>)
Regular Follow-Ups	Positive	"Lagi nila kaming pinupuntahan sa aming room."(<i>They are always visiting us in our room.</i>)
Clean and Organized Environment	Positive	"Ang malinis na kwarto ay nakatulong sa akin na makaramdam ng mas mabuti habang ako'y nandito sa hospital." (<i>A clean room contributed to me feeling better while I'm here in the hospital</i>)
Poor Communication	Negative	"Hindi ko naiintindihan ang sinasabi ng doctor." (<i>I don't understand what the doctor is saying.</i>)
Negative Staff Attitude	Negative	"Ang ilang mga nars ay tila naiinis kapag nagtatanong ako." (<i>It seems some nurses get annoyed when I ask questions</i>)
Staff Fatigue	Negative	"Maaari na pagod sila, kaya naapektuhan nito kung paano nila kami tratuhin." (<i>They might be tired, which could be affecting how they treat us</i>)
Lack of Individualized Attention	Negative	."Minsan, parang nakakalimutan ako." (<i>Sometimes, it feels like they forget about me.</i>)

Positive Interactions with Healthcare Staff - During hospitalization, geriatric patients consistently identified positive interactions with healthcare staff as a significant factor in their overall satisfaction. Respondents frequently mentioned the importance of "positive visits," emphasizing how regular, encouraging interactions fostered a sense of being valued. One patient remarked, "*Lagi nila kaming pinupuntahan sa aming room,*" (*They are always visiting us in our room.*) highlighting how the compassionate presence of staff made them feel prioritized. The demeanor of healthcare providers was crucial; one individual noted, "*Mababait mga nurses at doctor,*" (*The nurses and doctors are all very kind*) reflecting kindness and empathy exhibited by the staff that enhanced their overall experience.

Effective Communication - Effective communication emerged as another vital theme contributing to positive, caring encounters. Respondents frequently underscored the importance of clear explanations regarding their treatment plans. One patient expressed gratitude for the staff's thoroughness, stating, "*Pinapaliwanag ng maigi kung ano ang sakit namin,*" (*We are receiving a thorough explanation of our medical condition*) which illustrates how informative communication helped them better understand their health conditions. Holistic approach to care was appreciated, as one patient mentioned, "I have a holistic process of treatment while at Aglipay District Hospital," signifying that attention to both physical and emotional well-being significantly improved their overall treatment experience.

Impact of Staff Fatigue - Conversely, factors leading to negative caring encounters were predominantly linked to staff fatigue and burnout. Respondents identified moments when healthcare providers appeared exhausted, detracting from the care quality. One patient shared, "*Kapag napagod sila,*" suggesting that staff tiredness significantly impacted their interactions. This fatigue often manifested in a lack of engagement, which diminished the overall quality of care experienced by patients.

Lack of Respect - The lack of respect from some healthcare providers also contributed to patient dissatisfaction. One respondent candidly expressed, "*Walang respeto,*" indicating how disrespectful attitudes fostered feelings of neglect and diminished trust between patients and their caregivers. Such negative behaviors affected the quality of care and strained the patient-provider relationship, leaving patients feeling undervalued.

Ineffective Communication - Ineffective communication was another prevalent theme associated with negative experiences. Respondents expressed frustration regarding misunderstandings and need for clarification about their care. One patient illustrated this by stating, "Miscommunication between the client and health

provider” led to confusion and anxiety about their treatment. Additionally, specific incidents of perceived incompetence and inattentiveness from staff were evident; one respondent mentioned, “Hindi na naaattendan yung mga swero na paubos,” (They're not attending to the IV fluids that are running low). pointing out a particular situation that exemplified their feelings of being unvalued and neglected.

3.3 Part 3. Essential Elements of Caring Encounters in the Hospital from the

Table 2

Summary Matrix of the Essential Elements of Caring Encounters in the Hospital from the Perspective of Geriatric Patients in Aglipay District Hospital

Essential Element Description	Supporting Quotes
Importance of Consistent Visits	Regular visits from healthcare staff are crucial for enhancing feelings of respect and care among elderly patients. A clean hospital environment also reduces anxiety and enhances overall well-being.
Friendly Atmosphere	A welcoming environment the emotional well-being of elderly patients. The presence of competent staff is essential for providing effective care and treatment.
Holistic Care Approach	A comprehensive approach that addresses both emotional and physical health is vital for the recovery of elderly patients. A thorough treatment plan contributes significantly to their overall improvement in health.
Cultural Sensitivity and Communication	Cultural awareness and effective communication are key to fostering caring interactions. Effective communication, including using a patient's dialect, enhances understanding and strengthens connections. Patients feel equally treated regardless of their socioeconomic background, fostering a supportive environment.
	The importance of respectful treatment is emphasized to improve the overall hospital experience.
	“Palagiang pagbisita sa aming mga pasyente.” (Regular visits to our patients) “Amin nga basuraan da ket nadalus ken nabanglo haan nga angot ti ospital.” (All their trash cans are clean and fragrant, and most importantly, they don't smell like a hospital) “Maaliwalas kahit papano gagaan man lang pakiramdam namin. (The brightness helps us feel a little better) “Magaling na mga staff.” (The staff are highly competent “To have a holistic process of treatment while at the facility.” “For fast recovery and improve well-being.” “Wastong asal at walang deskriminasyon.” (Respectful behavior and non-discrimination.) “Pinapaliwanag sa aming dialect.” (They explain it in our dialect) “Walang mayaman o mahirap lahat naibibigay yung needs.” (They provide for the needs of everyone, whether rich or poor.) “Pinapakita sa mga pasyente ang kabaitan at respeto sa kanila.” (They show kindness, respect to the patients.)

Perspective of Geriatric Patients - Geriatric patients, who frequently confront particular obstacles during their hospitalization, rely heavily on caring contacts in a hospital setting to enhance their overall experience. It is crucial to comprehend this vulnerable population's ideas of what makes for efficient and compassionate care as they negotiate the complexity of medical treatment.

Importance of Consistent Visits and Clean Environment - According to elderly patients, regular visits and a tidy atmosphere are essential components of compassionate interactions in a medical facility. Patients emphasized how they felt respected and cared for by the healthcare staff's frequent visits. “Palagiang pagbisita sa aming mga pasyente,” (Regular visits to our patients) said a reply, highlighting the consolation that regular exchanges offer. A patient said, “Amin nga basuraan da ket nadalus ken nabanglo haan nga angot ti ospital,” (All their trash cans are clean and fragrant, and most importantly, they don't smell like a hospital) highlighting how a hygienic hospital setting reduces anxiety and improves their sense of overall well-being. A clean and orderly environment dramatically improves the overall experience.

Friendly Atmosphere and Competent Staff - The establishment of a welcoming environment, together with the presence of qualified employees, was another crucial component. Patients said being in a cozy and friendly setting improved their emotional well-being. “Maaliwalas kahit papano gagaan man lang pakiramdam namin,”

(*The brightness helps us feel a little better*) said one person, expressing how a welcoming environment lifts their spirits. The responders also emphasized the necessity for competent healthcare professionals. One said, "*Magaling na mga staff,*" (*The staff are highly competent*) emphasizing the importance of qualified staff to give efficient care and treatment.

Holistic Care Approach - The recovery of elderly individuals was shown to need a comprehensive approach to therapy. The respondents underlined the necessity for treatment that includes both emotional and physical recovery. One patient expressed a desire for a complete approach that covers all aspects of their health when they said, "*To have a holistic process of treatment while at the facility.*" Another responder reflected this attitude when they said, "*For fast recovery and improve well-being,*" highlighting how a comprehensive treatment plan contributes to their overall improvement in health.

Cultural Sensitivity and Effective Communication - It was determined that cultivating caring interactions required both cultural awareness and good communication. Patients emphasized how important it is for people to recognize and value the differences in their origins. "*Wastong asal at walang deskriminasyon,*" (*Respectful behavior and non-discrimination*) said one respondent, emphasizing the significance of treating every patient with dignity regardless of their background. One participant mentioned "*Pinapaliwanag sa aming dialect,*" (*They explain it in our dialect*) demonstrating how successful communication lowers barriers and develops stronger connections with healthcare practitioners. Other respondents indicated that speaking in their dialect increased their knowledge. Respondents discussed particular instances where they felt cultural awareness improved their hospital stay. "*Walang mayaman o mahirap lahat naibibigay yung needs,*" (*They provide for the needs of everyone, whether rich or poor*) said a patient, demonstrating that all patients, regardless of socioeconomic background, receive the same level of care from the personnel. Another said, "*Patients from different places, ages, sex, and beliefs are equally treated,*" illustrating how a supportive environment is fostered by a culture of equality among patients. As one patient put it, "*Pinapakita sa mga pasyente ang kabaitan at respeto sa kanila,*" (*They show kindness and respect to the patients.*) underscoring the importance of courteous treatment in improving their hospital experience; it was also evident how well healthcare professionals communicated and showed kindness and respect.

3.4 Part 4. Actions that can be Suggested to Improve the Quality of Care for Geriatric Patients during Hospitalization

Several key themes emerge based on the responses regarding actions to improve the quality of care for geriatric patients during hospitalization.

Table 3
Summary Matrix of Actions Suggested to improve the Quality of Care for Geriatric Patients during Hospitalization

Action Theme	Description	Supporting Quotes
Enhanced Communication and Regular Visits	Improved communication and frequent visits from healthcare professionals are essential for ensuring comfort and in treatment. Regular interaction helps build trust and alleviate anxiety during hospital stays.	"More on communication and constant visit." "Explaining more how hygiene affects their personality."
Dedicated Facilities for Geriatric Patients	Establishing specialized facilities for geriatric patients can create a more comfortable and supportive environment for their care.	"Baka mas mainam kung may isang room na para lang sa mga geriatric patients." (It might be better if there was a room specifically for geriatric patients.)
Facility Improvements	Upgrading infrastructure, particularly water supply and sanitary facilities, is critical for maintaining comfort and _____ dignity among elderly patients. Inadequate resources negatively impact patient experiences, highlighting the need for sufficient water and clean restrooms	"Pundasyon ng tubig" and "maayos na CR." (Essential water access and Well-maintained restroom) "Kasi nawawalan ng tubig sa tangke, konti lang ang naikakarga ng tangke ng tubig." (Due to water loss in the tank, the water tank's capacity is limited)

Staffing and Attentiveness	Increasing the number of attentive staff, including doctors and nurses, can significantly enhance the quality of care for geriatric patients.	<i>“Additional staff (Doctors and nurses).”</i>
	Attentiveness, respect, and care are vital for adequately addressing the needs of elderly patients.	<i>“Kailangan attentive, marespeto at maalaga.” (being attentive, respectful, and caring)</i>
Best Practices and Policy Implementation	Implementing best practices in hospitals, including clear communication of policies, can improve patient experiences and care quality.	<i>“Ipaliwanag ang mga polisiya ng ospital.” (Explain the hospital rules)</i>
	Enhancing awareness of cultural sensitivity and integrating it into care practices is vital for better patient- provider interactions.	<i>“Improving patient experiences may be achieved by raising knowledge of cultural sensitivity.”</i>

Enhanced Communication and Regular Visits - One significant proposal is the necessity of better communication and more frequent visits from healthcare professionals. Respondents stressed that senior patients' comfort and comprehension of their treatment may be significantly impacted by *“more on communication and constant visit.”* They think that regular interaction might foster trust and lessen the anxiety that frequently accompanies hospital stays. One, for example, recommended *“Explaining more how hygiene affects their personality,”* emphasizing the significance of attending to medical requirements and creating a nurturing atmosphere.

Dedicated Facilities for Geriatric Patients: “Room para sa Geriatric Patients” (A room designed for geriatric patients) - The idea of specialized facilities designed to meet the requirements of older adults is another critical issue. One suggestion was to set aside a space specifically for senior citizens to foster a more straightforward and encouraging environment. *“Baka mas mainam kung may isang room na para lang sa mga geriatric patients,”* said a participant, implying that a customized setting may improve their experience and treatment.

Facility Improvements: “Maayos na CR” (clean/operational restrooms) - The necessity for infrastructure upgrades, notably in the areas of water supply and sanitary facilities, was often mentioned by the participants. The mention of *“pundasyon ng tubig”* (sufficient water supply) and *“maayos na CR” (clean/operational restrooms)* are two specific instances. They stated that in order to preserve comfort and dignity, these communities must have enough resources. *“Kasi nawawalan ng tubig sa tangke, konti lang ang naikakarga ng tangke ng tubig,”* (Due to water loss in the tank, the water tank's capacity is limited) said one responder, emphasizing how frustrating it is to not have enough water in the facilities, which negatively affects their experience.

Staffing and Attentiveness - Another subject that came up throughout the conversations was how important it is to have enough staff members who are also attentive. According to respondents, the care given to elderly people may be greatly enhanced by having *“additional staff (Doctors and nurses).”* They stressed that to address their requirements adequately, *“Kailangan attentive, marespeto at maalaga” (being attentive, respectful, and caring)* is essential. This opinion supports the notion that having enough employees may improve the overall service standard and guarantee that patients feel appreciated.

Best Practices and Policy Implementation: “Ipaliwanag ang Polisiya” (Explain the hospital rules) - The necessity of putting best practices they have seen or heard about into practice was finally emphasized by the respondents. They recommended that hospitals, in addition to attending to patients' needs, concentrate on promoting care, attention, and respect. One participant, for example, mentioned that it is important to communicate hospital procedures clearly by noting, *“Ipaliwanag ang mga polisiya ng ospital” (Explain the hospital rules)*. They think that improving patient experiences may be achieved by raising knowledge of cultural sensitivity and incorporating it into care procedures.

4. Discussion

I. Geriatric Patients' Caring Experiences during Hospitalization

The experiences of elderly patients in hospitals frequently serve as a reminder of the value of providing them with kind and considerate care, since this may have a substantial impact on their general wellbeing and recuperation. Because of their advanced age and weakness, geriatric patients are particularly vulnerable to the quality of treatment they get, which is influenced by a number of factors, including the frequency with which they see healthcare providers, the degree to which their concerns are addressed, and the general attitude of the personnel. In many cases, geriatric patients reported positive experiences, mainly stemming from the healthcare staff's consistent follow-up and attentiveness. Frequent visits by healthcare professionals made patients feel secure and cared for, with one respondent noting, *"They always came to check on us in our room,"* suggesting that regular monitoring and the physical presence of the staff were highly valued. Additionally, a positive atmosphere, reinforced by staff members' respectful demeanor, was another crucial aspect of these positive experiences. Patients often emphasized how the politeness and respect shown by nurses and doctors improved their emotional state, helping them cope with the stress of hospitalization. Patients felt secure while they were at the hospital not just because of the medical staff's professionalism, understanding, and demeanor, but also because of the facility's procedures, structure, and support. Through patient-centered activities, healthcare practitioners and medical facilities should work to close the gap in patient safety awareness factors.

Effective communication was also a dominant theme in positive encounters. Many geriatric patients appreciated the clarity with which healthcare providers explained their conditions and the medications being administered. One patient shared, *"They explained well about our medications and treatment plans,"* highlighting the importance of clear, consistent information in reducing anxiety and fostering trust. There were also accounts of unfavorable caring interactions, which were frequently connected to forgetfulness and a sense of being devoid of empathy. Some patients noticed that when healthcare professionals were stressed out or exhausted, their conduct declined. For example, a patient stated, *"Maybe when they are tired, they become less attentive,"* pointing to how workload and staff fatigue can negatively impact the quality of care. This suggests a need for better workload management and support for healthcare workers to prevent burnout, which directly affects patient experience.

Miscommunication between healthcare personnel and patients was another important source of bad experiences. Situations when there was a language barrier or unclear instructions added to the helplessness and irritation. As one patient recounted, *"There was miscommunication between the client and the health provider,"* indicating that even small breakdowns in communication can have significant negative consequences for patient care. Additionally, a lack of responsiveness to basic needs, such as failing to attend to medical equipment like IV drips, further compounded negative feelings. One patient specifically noted, *they didn't attend to the IV drips when they were running out,* exemplifying how neglect of even routine tasks can lead to feelings of abandonment. While, cultural sensitivity and respectful communication were also found to be critical in shaping the patients' perceptions of care. Elderly individuals stressed that healthcare professionals should respect their cultural heritage and speak to them in a language and style that suits them. Some respondents, for example, found it helpful that medical professionals spoke to them in their own tongue, which helped them comprehend their care and feel more at ease in an unfamiliar setting. One patient noted, *"They explained things in our dialect,"* which helped in bridging any cultural or language gaps.

The caliber of interactions geriatric patients have with healthcare professionals has a significant impact on their experiences while they are hospitalized. Negative interactions were frequently associated with staff exhaustion, misunderstandings, and disregard for fundamental requirements, whereas positive ones were characterized by kind, considerate, and courteous care. Older patients' hospital stays may be greatly improved by making sure that medical staff members have training in effective communication and cultural sensitivity and are assisted in maintaining their well-being.

II. Factors Contributing to Positive and Negative Caring Encounters for Geriatric Patients during their Hospitalization

When examining the factors contributing to positive and negative caring encounters for geriatric patients during hospitalization, it becomes evident that effective communication is paramount. Geriatric patients frequently feel vulnerable and unsure about their care, therefore it is critical for physicians to communicate in an educated and empathic way. As noted by patients, regular interactions enhance their comfort levels and provide them with a sense of reassurance. Compassionate staff conduct is another important aspect in determining the quality of care for older people. Healthcare practitioners who demonstrate tolerance, empathy, and respect have a major influence on their patients' emotional and psychological well-being. Positive encounters are frequently marked by attentive staff members who emphasize the wants and concerns of elderly patients. When healthcare workers actively listen and engage with patients, it fosters a sense of dignity and validation. Respondents have highlighted the importance of having staff members who are skilled and demonstrate a caring demeanor. This compassionate approach helps create a supportive environment where elderly patients feel safe to express their fears and seek assistance without hesitation.

The hospital's physical environment plays a substantial role in shaping patient experiences. Many patients have expressed how a hygienic setting reduces anxiety and enhances their sense of well-being. Clean and accessible restrooms, functional medical equipment, and adequate resources all contribute to a positive hospital stay. Conversely, shortcomings in the physical environment can lead to negative encounters. Issues such as inadequate water supply or poorly maintained facilities can result in feelings of discomfort and indignity. These environmental factors can overshadow the care the staff provides and significantly affect the patient's overall experience in the hospital.

On the other side, poor communication is a big factor to unpleasant caring interactions. Patients get confused and dissatisfied when they believe they have not been sufficiently educated about their diseases or treatment options. A lack of clear communication from healthcare personnel can worsen senior patients' emotions of worry and powerlessness, eroding their faith in the system. Furthermore, limited staffing is a major element that reduces the quality of care for senior people. Many respondents have pointed out the direct correlation between the availability of healthcare professionals and the level of care received. Environmental issues within the hospital might have a substantial influence on geriatric patients' experiences. Many patients have raised concerns about inadequate facilities, such as filthy bathrooms or a lack of basic resources. These flaws can cause suffering and indignity, overshadowing the benefits of healthcare professionals' treatment. For example, problems caused by limited water availability might increase patient stress, significantly impacting their whole experience.

The elements that influence positive and bad care interactions for geriatric patients during hospitalization are complex and interwoven. Effective communication, caring staff conduct, and a supportive physical setting are all critical for fostering pleasant experiences. Conversely, poor communication, inadequate staffing, and environmental shortcomings significantly detract from the quality of care received. Healthcare institutions may foster a more compassionate and encouraging atmosphere for senior patients by emphasizing good communication, enough personnel, and a patient-centered approach.

III. Essential Elements of Caring Encounters in the Hospital from the Perspective of Geriatric Patients

Caring encounters in hospital settings are paramount for enhancing the experiences of geriatric patients, who often face unique challenges during their hospitalizations (Darkwah, 2023). Understanding the essential elements that contribute to effective and compassionate care is crucial in addressing the needs of this vulnerable population. Geriatric patients rely heavily on the quality of interactions with healthcare providers to navigate the complexities of medical treatment, and their perspectives reveal significant insights into what constitutes compassionate care.

From geriatric patients' perspective, regular healthcare staff visits significantly enhance their feelings of respect and care (Sharkiya, 2023). Patients express that consistent interactions with providers foster a sense of comfort and reassurance during their hospital stay. The sentiment, "*Palagiang pagbisita sa aming mga pasyente,*" underscores the emotional support that frequent visits provide. A clean hospital environment is also essential for reducing anxiety and enhancing overall well-being. As one patient noted, "*Amin nga basuraan da ket Daedalus ken nab anglo haan nga got ti hospital,*" highlighting that cleanliness contributes to a positive hospital experience. A tidy and organized environment is linked to higher patient satisfaction and can alleviate stress in vulnerable populations.

Participants emphasized the importance of treating everyone with dignity, regardless of their background, as expressed in the quote "*Wastong asal at walang deskriminasyon.*" This sentiment highlights the importance of cultural sensitivity in healthcare settings, as it promotes inclusivity and respect. Effective communication, particularly using a patient's preferred dialect, improves comprehension and develops relationships with healthcare practitioners. One participant said, "*Pinapaliwanag sa aming dialect,*" implying that communicating in the patient's own tongue breaks down barriers and develops a stronger relationship. Patients voiced their wish for egalitarian treatment, saying, "*Walang mayaman o mahirap lahat naibibigay yung needs.*" This demonstrates a supportive atmosphere in which all patients feel respected and cared for. As one patient put it, "*Pinapakita sa mga pasyente ang kabaitan at respeto sa kanila,*" underlining how kindness and respect from healthcare workers improve the whole hospital experience.

IV. Actions that can be Suggested to Improve the Quality of Care for Geriatric Patients during Hospitalization

Improving the quality of care for older patients during hospitalization necessitates specialized interventions that meet their specific needs and problems. One of the most essential ideas is to improve communication and increase the frequency of visits by healthcare providers. Respondents emphasized that improved communication builds trust and decreases fear, which is especially important for senior patients. Regular encounters enable healthcare practitioners to explain medical procedures and hygiene practices in understandable language, making patients feel more safe and informed about their treatment plans. This strategy enhances comfort and empowers patients by integrating them in their treatment, resulting in a more positive hospital stay.

Another critical suggestion is the establishment of dedicated facilities for geriatric patients. Creating specific wards or rooms tailored to the needs of older adults can significantly enhance their hospitalization experience. By designing these spaces with the physical and emotional needs of elderly patients in mind, hospitals can provide a more supportive environment. Such specialized areas could include adaptations like wider doorways, handrails, and comfortable furnishings, all aimed at improving accessibility and comfort. This dedicated approach can contribute to better health outcomes and increased patient satisfaction, as elderly patients are more likely to feel understood and cared for in a tailored setting. Patient-centered care (PCC) is an important healthcare approach that focuses patients' individual experiences, values, needs, and preferences throughout treatment. This method promotes a therapeutic interaction between patients and healthcare workers, which leads to better health outcomes, more efficient resource use, and higher patient satisfaction (Jobe, 2023).

Facility improvements are equally vital in maintaining the dignity and comfort of geriatric patients. Infrastructure investment addresses fundamental needs that significantly impact patient experiences, particularly regarding water supply and sanitation. Participants in the discussion emphasized the importance of reliable access to clean restrooms and sufficient water supply. Upgrading plumbing and restroom facilities ensures elderly patients maintain their dignity during hospitalization. Well-maintained facilities can create a more positive environment, ultimately supporting patients' recovery and overall satisfaction with their care. Increasing staffing levels and improving attentiveness among healthcare professionals is another crucial factor in enhancing care for geriatric patients. Respondents advocated recruiting additional nursing staff explicitly trained in geriatric care, emphasizing the importance of being attentive, respectful, and addressing patients' needs and concerns.

Implementing a mentorship system can further enhance the quality of care by ensuring that new hires receive support and guidance in understanding the unique requirements of elderly patients. This commitment to attentive care fosters a compassionate healthcare environment, promoting a sense of respect and appreciation for geriatric patients.

Implementing best practices and clear communication of hospital policies are essential for improving patient experiences. Respondents suggested hospitals should focus on instituting proven best practices tailored to the geriatric population, including cultural sensitivity training. Ensuring hospital policies are communicated effectively to patients and their families can empower them to navigate their care confidently. Raising awareness of cultural considerations can lead to better patient-provider relationships and enhance overall satisfaction with the care provided. By focusing on these critical areas—communication, dedicated facilities, facility improvements, staffing, and best practices—hospitals can create a more supportive and responsive healthcare environment for geriatric patients, promoting dignity, comfort, and respect throughout their hospitalization.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

In light of the above-mentioned observations, the following deductions were made: The experiences of geriatric patients during hospitalization revealed that compassionate care, effective communication, and the presence of dedicated healthcare providers significantly impact their overall well-being. Positive interactions and attentiveness from medical staff foster a supportive environment that caring. More staff means more personalized attention, allowing for promptly helps alleviate anxiety and enhances the patient's perception of care received. The factors contributing to positive and negative caring encounters highlight the importance of interpersonal dynamics in healthcare settings. Positive experiences are primarily attributed to the demeanor and attentiveness of healthcare providers, while negative encounters often stem from staff fatigue, lack of respect, and ineffective communication. Addressing these factors is crucial for improving the quality of care for geriatric patients. From the standpoint of senior patients, cleanliness, attentive personnel, and a supporting environment are critical components of caring encounters. Patients underlined that developing trust and guaranteeing successful treatment depends on a polite atmosphere in addition to skilled medical professionals. These components are essential for raising patient satisfaction and encouraging healing. The guidelines for raising the standard of care for older adults emphasize how important it is to have better lines of communication, specialized facilities, and infrastructure upgrades. Healthcare facilities can significantly improve the quality of care given to elderly patients, ultimately improving patient satisfaction and health outcomes, by implementing strategies that prioritize dedicated care environments, sufficient staffing, and clear communication of hospital policies.

The following are the recommendations based on the findings of the study: Healthcare professionals should be trained effectively in communicating with geriatric patients. This will ensure that information about drugs, treatment plans, and patient progress is communicated understandably and engagingly. Create guidelines encouraging medical professionals to follow up frequently and check in. This will create a caring atmosphere where senior citizens feel appreciated and cared for on a constant basis. To fulfill the unique needs of elderly patients better and encourage their comfort while they are in the hospital, set aside certain sections or rooms for them. Improving the facilities' amenities, such as water supply and lavatories, is also pivotal. Include training on cultural sensitivity in staff development initiatives to guarantee that patients are treated with dignity and compassion, considering their varied backgrounds and communication styles.

6. References

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