Abstract: Background: The responsibility of case managers is to facilitate and coordinate patient care. Their presence in the implementation of case management is expected to have a beneficial impact. The program is also expected to benefit the hospital in a variety of ways, specifically in terms of patient service management related to more cost-effective services. Objective: This research aims to explore the experience of case managers in carrying out case management at Langsa City General Hospital (RSUD), which has been operational since June 2019. Methods: This research adopted a qualitative design with a descriptive phenomenological approach. From a total of seven individuals on duty, five case managers from the nursing profession were included in the population. The remaining two are medical professionals and refused to participate. Data were collected by conducting interviews, observations, and documentation. Results: The results showed that case managers are still in the honeymoon phase, with their services focused on the collaboration gap and overlapping roles. Conclusion: Almost all case managers feel that their work experience has not been fully implemented in accordance with the work program. They have to adapt to new tasks and receive some training related to the implementation of case management in hospitals. Keywords: Case manager, case management, and case manager experience.

BACKGROUND

Patient care service is a complex process involving various health professions including nurses, doctors, pharmacists, nutrition, and administrative personnel (Lancaster, 2014). The case management method is a form of health care that is considered accountable for improving the service quality. This method has been proven to be a solution, specifically in saving maintenance costs (Joo & Huber, 2014). The implementation of case management in long-term hospitalization reduces and controls the increase in medical costs (Oh & Oh, 2017).

The Indonesian Hospital Accreditation Commission (KARS) since 2012 through hospital accreditation standards uses the term "Patient Service Manager" to promote the development of case management services. Case managers come from a variety of academic backgrounds, including social workers, psychologists, and nurses. In practice, they act as health educators, counselors, advocates, mentors, researchers, and administrators (Joo & Huber, 2014).

Nurse case managers are front-line professionals that interact in real-world settings as service providers and recipients of medical assistance programs (Oh & Oh, 2017). According to several research, case management was applied in Indonesian hospitals, such as in West, East, and Central Java, as well as other provinces (Sunaringtyas & Sulisno (2015). The case manager program in Aceh province was also applied in Dr. Zainoel Abidin and Meuraxa Hospital in Banda Aceh City. This was carried out with the implementation of standard case management in the inpatient room of Dr. Zainoel Abidin Hospital with a 95.2% (Noviasari & Kamil 2016).

The role of case managers is highly needed in optimizing integrated patient care as well as to improve interprofessional collaboration, facilitating the fulfillment of patient care needs, including their families and caregivers. Therefore, this research aims to
explore experiences in the implementation of case management by case managers at Langsa City General Hospital (RSUD).

**METHOD**

This research adopted a qualitative design with a phenomenological approach focusing on the experience from the informant's point of view (Polit & Beck, 2014). Ethical approval was obtained from the Nursing Research Ethics Commission (KEPK) of the Faculty of Nursing, Syiah Kuala University. The ethical clearance letter was obtained on July 28, 2020, with the number B/1949/UN11.1.12/DL/2020. Furthermore, permission for data collection was obtained from the director of RSUD Langsa City.

1. **Information Source**

   The total informants used were five case managers. The inclusion criteria include those with three years of experience as professional caregivers, a minimum education level of nurses for the nursing profession, and a bachelor for other professions.

2. **Data Collection**

   Data were collected using in-depth interviews conducted by Fazrina at RSUD Langsa City.

   After obtaining permission from the education and training party, information was provided to the facilitator concerning the criteria for the desired candidate, namely all case managers in the hospital, both from the medical and nursing professions. Furthermore, an explicit explanation was given to informants that the ongoing discussion would be recorded from start to finish to enable documentation for analysis after the interview.

3. **Data Analysis**

   Content analysis technique is used to obtain an objective, systematic, and sociologically relevant description of mass communication messages using quantitative or qualitative procedures or a combination of both (Ritonga, 2004).

**RESULT**

1. **Demographic Data**

   Almost all of the current case managers are former heads of rooms in their previous positions. The data on the informant characteristics included age, gender, occupation, religion, ethnicity, education, and address. The characteristics are shown in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Informant Age</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ethnic group</td>
<td>Aceh</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Master of Nursing</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nursing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   These are some statements from informants:

   "There were no selections, they were immediately appointed. Because there are conditions right? Probably because, I have been the head of the room, at least a nurse and have several years of work experience." (i-2)

   "There is no written selection. They saw this while I was working. After looking around, I realize that there are some conditions here that fulfill my criteria." (i-4)

2. **The Theme of Research Analysis Results**

   The categories of themes identified are shown from the following explanations:

   **Theme 1: The Honeymoon Phase**

   According to this theme, the task of case managers has no significant difference from their as professional care providers (PPA), which required direct interaction with patients. However, the communication they have to foster is more intense than when they were PPA. Since case managers’ recruitment is confined to selecting from available resources, then they are still in the honeymoon phase. Furthermore, a formal written test is not required or used as criteria in selecting a case manager.

   These are some statements from informants:

   "There were no selections, they were immediately appointed. Because there are conditions right? Probably because, I have been the head of the room, at least a nurse and have several years of work experience." (i-2)

   "There is no written selection. They saw this while I was working. After looking around, I realize that there are some conditions here that fulfill my criteria." (i-4)

   **Theme 2: Focus of Service: Patients**

   This theme explains that case managers have important role in managing various patient needs from different cases. Informants agreed that in carrying out
The management of RSUD Langsa City is expected to improve the quality of case manager competencies by compiling continuing education programs, both in-house training and coaching to

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increase their knowledge in playing their roles and functions in accordance with the accreditation demands.

REFERENCES

- KARS. (2016). *Panduan Praktik Manager Pelayanan Pasien*.