



QUALITATIVE STUDY: ETHICAL STANDARDS AND PATIENT RIGHTS

Ummul Hairat*, Melda Ningsih Sibela

Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan RS. Prof. Dr. J.A. Latumeten, Silale, Nusaniwe, Ambon, Maluku, 97112, Indonesia

*luluhairat@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the era of health transformation following the enactment of Law Number 17 of 2023, hospitals are faced with the significant challenge of integrating ethical standards and patient rights protection into real-world service practices. As a referral hospital with high patient dynamics, Al-Fatah Ambon General Hospital requires an internal evaluation mechanism to ensure that administrative policies are aligned with implementation in the field. This study aims to analyse the effectiveness of the implementation of ethical standards and patient rights through a self-assessment method. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a thematic analysis design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with five key informants: the Head of Personnel, personnel staff, HRD, Head of Training, and the Secretariat. Data collection used a semi-structured interview technique. Data were collected using a self-assessment instrument. The data analysis technique employed was thematic analysis, then compared and synchronised with the latest national regulations, particularly Law No. 17 of 2023. The study findings reveal a high level of compliance, with an average score exceeding 85%. Al-Fatah General Hospital achieved a perfect score (100%) in the aspects of complaint handling and understanding of managerial ethics. This success was driven by the transparency of its no-down-payment emergency financing policy and ethical leadership that prioritises patient safety over administrative procedures. Al-Fatah General Hospital Ambon has successfully internalised ethical standards and patient rights in accordance with the latest national regulations. A strong internal oversight system and a responsive complaint handling mechanism are key to maintaining service quality and public trust.

Keywords: al-fatah hospital; hospital; hospital ethics; patient rights (law no. 17/2023); qualitative study; self-assessment

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalisation and rapid advancements in information technology, the healthcare sector faces increasingly complex demands for professionalism. Hospitals, as the frontline institutions of healthcare services, are not only required to provide quality medical care but also must be able to integrate noble work ethics into every operational dimension (Rahman et al., 2025). Given the continuously evolving social dynamics that often trigger ethical conflicts, healthcare professionals are expected to uphold higher moral standards than other professions, as every action they take is directly related to human dignity and life (Cheon et al., 2024). The internalisation of ethical values, norms, and professional discipline becomes crucial as a foundation to ensure patient safety and maintain public trust in the healthcare system (Maryanto & Triadi, 2025).

Regulatory-wise, the government has strengthened service standards through Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health. This regulation provides a constitutional mandate for every healthcare facility to provide legal protection and certainty of rights for service users without exception (President of the Republic of Indonesia [Presiden RI], 2023). This aligns with hospital accreditation standards that regard Patient and Family Rights (HPK) as a fundamental component. Engaging patients and their families in the decision-making process has been demonstrated to significantly enhance the quality of care. Consequently, it is crucial for hospitals to systematically educate patients about their rights and to train medical staff to respect the values and perspectives of patients in a professional manner (KARS, 2018) in (Wahyuni, 2022).

Despite existing regulations, significant implementation challenges persist. Ministry of Health data indicates 51 malpractice cases between 2023 and 2025, highlighting the need for stronger oversight (Desideria, 2025). In this context, non-litigation approaches, such as mediation, are particularly important. This is highlighted in Law No. 17 of 2023, which aims to achieve substantive justice and restore professional relationships based on the principles of beneficence and patient autonomy (Al-Wathinani et al., 2023; Hollósvölgyi, 2025) in (Maryanto & Triadi, 2025).

The disparity between regulation and actual practice is often exacerbated by the pressures of high service volumes and limited resources. To address this gap, an independent evaluation tool utilising the self-assessment method is essential for fostering management reflection and mapping ethical compliance in practice. Al-Fatah Hospital in Ambon, a key referral hospital catering to a diverse socio-cultural patient population, serves as an ideal candidate for further investigation. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the self-assessment process at Al-Fatah Hospital in capturing the implementation of ethical standards and patient rights in 2025, ensuring that the quality of care is upheld in the face of evolving national health regulations.

METHOD

This study utilises a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the implementation of ethical standards and patient rights at Al-Fatah Hospital in Ambon. The research design employed thematic analysis to identify key categories and themes associated with self-assessment. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews employing a systematically developed self-assessment instrument. The research was conducted at Al-Fatah Hospital in Ambon over a period of two weeks. Participants in the study were selected using purposive sampling, with the inclusion criteria for healthcare workers comprising individuals who had been employed at Al-Fatah Ambon General Hospital for a minimum of one year, were directly engaged in patient care, and held structural positions within the organisation. A total of five informants were interviewed, including the Head of Personnel, personnel staff, HRD, Head of Training, and the Secretariat. The data collection process was carried out over two weeks at the hospital premises using semi-structured interview techniques. The data collection instrument was a self-assessment tool systematically developed to cover six main indicators: patients' rights and obligations, hospital's rights and obligations, hospital ethics, professional ethics, complaint handling, and compliance with the latest health legislation. The use of this instrument aimed to enhance the reliability and validity of the results obtained through management reflection. The data analysis technique employed was thematic analysis to process the interview results into meaningful categories. The data collected from interview transcripts were analysed to identify patterns of compliance and the effectiveness of the hospital's internal policies. The resulting analysis was then compared and synchronised with the latest national regulations, particularly Law No. 17 of 2023 concerning Health, to ensure that hospital service practices are aligned with constitutional mandates and current accreditation standards.

RESULT

Through a self-assessment analysis conducted via six principal indicators at Al-Fatah Ambon Hospital, the following findings have been established:

Indicator I: Implementation of Patient Rights and Obligations

The results of a self-assessment interview conducted at Al-Fatah General Hospital regarding patient rights and obligations indicate a strong understanding and implementation of these principles among the majority of patients. Out of 58 questions posed, 56 were answered correctly, resulting in an impressive 95% response rate. This interview aimed to evaluate the hospital's effectiveness in adhering to the relevant regulations and policies concerning patient rights and obligations. The hospital director expressed the institution's commitment to delivering quality, safe, and dignified health services in alignment with the rights of patients as outlined in applicable laws and standards established by the hospital accreditation body. To ensure compliance with service standards, the

hospital regularly undertakes internal evaluations that address both patient rights and obligations. The director reinforced his dedication to continually enhancing service quality by prioritising the fulfilment of patient rights and ensuring that patients are informed of their obligations. The hospital is committed to ongoing innovation and aims to be a trusted healthcare institution, providing humane, safe, and high-quality services.

Indicator II: Implementation of Hospital Rights and Obligations

A self-assessment interview conducted at Al-Fatah General Hospital regarding the implementation of hospital rights and obligations reveals that the majority of these rights and obligations are being executed effectively. Out of 60 questions posed, 53 received a "yes" response, resulting in a correct answer rate of 88%. The hospital's adherence to these rights and obligations is consistent with established standards, including the policy of not requiring advance payments from emergency patients. This approach aligns with the fundamental principles of healthcare services that prioritise patient protection, safety, and medical needs. This assessment is grounded in several regulations and guidelines outlined in the most recent Minister of Health Regulation (Permenkes), specifically Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 27 of 2021 concerning Healthcare Services in Hospitals. This Ministerial Regulation supersedes the previous regulation, which primarily concentrated on service standards, rights, obligations, and the implementation of quality healthcare services. The updated regulation offers more comprehensive guidelines on how hospitals should deliver quality, safe, and equitable services to all members of the community. Additionally, it aims to enhance accountability and transparency within hospital operations.

Indicator III: Hospital Ethics

The outcomes of a self-assessment interview with the Hospital Director regarding the hospital's ethics self-evaluation revealed a positive response to all 8 questions. This indicates that the Director possesses a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of hospital ethics in alignment with the applicable Minister of Health Regulation (Permenkes). The affirmative answers suggest that the Director not only grasps the provisions outlined in the regulation but also recognises the significance of integrating ethical considerations into hospital policies to provide quality and respectful services. These results clearly demonstrate the hospital's strong commitment to upholding ethical principles as mandated by Permenkes, including the protection of patient rights, respect for privacy, avoidance of conflicts of interest, and adherence to professional standards in both management processes and medical services. Furthermore, the Director ensures that all hospital staff, including both medical and non-medical personnel, are thoroughly educated about the ethical standards that must be observed, in accordance with the guidelines established in the regulation.

Indicator IV: Implementation of Professional Ethics

The outcomes of the self-assessment interview conducted with the Hospital Director highlight that Al-Fatah Hospital has achieved a perfect score of 9 out of 9 on the self-assessment of professional ethics. This indicates that the hospital has effectively implemented the principles of professional ethics, recognising their crucial role in upholding the quality of health services, fostering patient trust, and ensuring that all medical staff fulfil their responsibilities with integrity and accountability. The Hospital Director reaffirmed the commitment to uphold and advance professional ethics across all facets of health services offered by the institution. Moving forward, the hospital is dedicated to ensuring that all personnel, from medical staff to administrative teams, adhere to the established code of ethics, delivering services with responsibility, honesty, and respect for patients. Additionally, the hospital plans to enhance education and training focused on professional ethics to maintain high standards in health care delivery.

Indicator V: Complaint Handling

Following a self-assessment interview with the Hospital Director, it can be concluded that Al-Fatah Hospital has established an exemplary system for receiving, managing, and resolving patient

complaints. The hospital demonstrates clear procedures and active involvement from management, achieving a score of 100%. This interview seeks to explore further the policies, practices, and mechanisms the hospital employs in addressing complaints from patients and their families, as well as to assess the extent to which the hospital adheres to established standards in this area. The Hospital Director detailed how complaints are handled transparently and responsively, in alignment with the principles of fairness.

Indicator VI: Compliance with the Implementation of Legislation Related to Hospitals

The self-assessment interview with the Hospital Director highlighted that the hospital achieved a perfect score of 9 out of 9 on the professional ethics assessment. This outcome indicates that Al-Fatah Hospital has effectively implemented professional ethics, recognising its critical role in maintaining the quality of health services, fostering patient trust, and ensuring that all medical staff perform their duties with full responsibility and integrity. The Hospital Director emphasised the ongoing commitment to uphold and enhance professional ethics in every aspect of the services provided. The hospital is dedicated to ensuring that all personnel, from medical staff to administrative employees, adhere to the established code of ethics, delivering services with accountability, honesty, and respect for patients. Additionally, the hospital plans to further enhance education and training related to professional ethics to uphold high standards in healthcare services.

DISCUSSION

Indicator I: Implementation of Patient Rights and Obligations

A recent self-assessment interview conducted at Al-Fatah General Hospital examined the implementation of patient rights and obligations throughout the facility. The findings indicate that adherence to Law No. 17 of 2023 not only enhances service quality but also fosters a relationship of mutual respect between patients and healthcare professionals. This, in turn, positively influences public health outcomes. The law was enacted on August 8, 2023, and took effect immediately. Patient rights are defined in Article 276, while Article 277 outlines patient obligations (President of the Republic of Indonesia [Presiden RI], 2023). The findings aligned with the research conducted by Wahyuni (2022), which indicated a notably high level of positive perception among respondents regarding the implementation of patient rights, reported at 86.7%, as well as participation in services, recorded at 86.5% (Wahyuni, 2022). The fulfilment of patient rights serves as a significant reflection of the obligations held by both the state and service providers to uphold the dignity and autonomy of individuals (Putturaj et al., 2021). The achievements of Al-Fatah Hospital in this Indicator underscore the significance of delivering information through accessible and comprehensible methods, while also upholding the principles of informed consent. These elements are fundamental in establishing a comprehensive framework for public health.

Indicator II: Implementation of Hospital Rights and Obligations

The findings from a self-assessment interview conducted at Al-Fatah General Hospital concerning the implementation of hospital rights and obligations reveal that the hospital possesses a clear and transparent framework for financing emergency patients. Additionally, it has established a policy that prioritises patient safety while also upholding essential administrative procedures. This observation aligns with the insights of Azzahra et al. (2022), who emphasise the significance of expert support in enhancing the patient safety system within hospitals (Azzahra et al., 2022). Transparency in healthcare organisations is vital for fostering a culture of patient-centred care, where patients feel respected, informed, and actively engaged in their health and well-being. This commitment to transparency enhances patient safety and drives quality improvement within the healthcare system. Open communication regarding an organisation's performance, outcomes, and processes is essential, as it leads to greater accountability, trust, and patient involvement. Organisations that prioritise transparency value patient-centred care, actively involve patients in decision-making, and encourage shared understanding between healthcare providers and patients. Moreover, psychological safety is a key component of organisational transparency. Patient safety

reporting systems are instrumental in promoting transparency by allowing for anonymous reporting of safety concerns and incidents. These systems enable early identification of risks, support continuous improvement, and ensure compliance with regulatory standards. By fostering a culture of openness and learning from near-misses, transparency in reporting addresses systemic issues and human error. This approach aligns with ethical principles and has the potential to mitigate legal challenges (Fukami, 2024). By disclosing information, hospitals fulfil regulatory obligations while simultaneously reducing legal risks through a proactive ethical framework.

Indicator III: Hospital Ethics

The findings from the self-assessment interview with the Hospital Director concerning the hospital's ethical evaluation reveal a robust leadership commitment to ensuring compliance with the ethical standards established by the latest Minister of Health Regulation in Indonesia, specifically Regulation Number 33 of 2022 about Hospital Management (Kemenkes, 2022). This aligns with the findings of Maryanto and Triadi (2025), which assert that ethical values and discipline serve as fundamental pillars in the preservation of professional integrity, while simultaneously safeguarding patient rights (Maryanto & Triadi, 2025). The application of the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice at this hospital fosters more compassionate clinical decision-making. Notably, the incorporation of mediation as a non-litigation approach, as mandated by Law No. 17 of 2023, has effectively restored trust between patients and medical personnel at Al-Fatah Hospital in instances of ethical conflicts (Maryanto & Triadi, 2025).

Indicator IV: Implementation of Professional Ethics

The findings from the self-assessment interview conducted with the Hospital Director regarding professional ethics indicate that the hospital complies with the relevant professional ethics standards as outlined in Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health. This legislation encompasses various provisions related to the health profession, including the professional and ethical obligations that health workers must uphold in delivering services to the community. Specifically, Article 31 stipulates that health professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and other health personnel, are required to conduct their practices in alignment with the applicable professional code of ethics. Furthermore, the regulation of Professional Responsibility (Articles 31 and 39) underscores that health workers are professionally accountable for every action taken in their medical practice, ensuring that such actions adhere to established medical standards and do not violate the professional code of ethics. Additionally, Professional Ethics Supervision is addressed (Article 41) (President of the Republic of Indonesia [Presiden RI], 2023). In accordance with the findings of Rahman et al. (2025), which highlight the necessity of establishing a comprehensive ethics management system within the training and performance evaluation of healthcare professionals, this research aims to contribute to the advancement of patient-centred care practices grounded in professional ethical values (Rahman et al., 2025). The Transformasi of health law underscores the importance of service quality, which is fundamentally linked to the commitment of healthcare professionals in upholding the dignity of their vocation (Soge, 2023).

Indicator V: Complaint Handling

Following a self-assessment interview with the Hospital Director, it can be concluded that Al-Fatah Hospital has established an exemplary system for receiving, managing, and addressing patient complaints. With a perfect score of 100%, the hospital acknowledges that complaints can arise from various facets of service, both medical and non-medical. To this end, the hospital is committed to providing clear and accessible channels for patients and their families wishing to submit complaints. Furthermore, the hospital aims to resolve these complaints swiftly, appropriately, and fairly, in accordance with established standards, thereby ensuring compliance with the latest legislation governing complaint handling in Indonesia—specifically, Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health. This law outlines regulations for health services, including provisions related to patient or public complaints. Article 37 of the law guarantees every patient's right to file a complaint if they

feel disadvantaged or dissatisfied with the health services received. Article 39 stipulates that hospitals and healthcare providers must maintain clear procedures and systems for managing complaints from patients or the public. Complaints must be processed transparently and equitably, providing adequate responses or solutions in accordance with applicable standards. Consequently, the hospital has successfully met these requirements (President of the Republic of Indonesia [Presiden RI], 2023). This situation stands in contrast to the findings of Sakinah et al. (2022) from other institutions, which indicated that complaint mechanisms were frequently inadequate. Al-Fatah General Hospital distinguishes itself through its responsive organisational structure and the integration of information technology to address issues fairly and transparently (Sakinah et al., 2022). Internal factors, such as employee competence and a robust organisational culture, are essential to achieving success in delivering comprehensive consumer protection (Prayuti et al., 2025).

Indicator VI: Compliance with the Implementation of Legislation Related to Hospitals

The findings from the self-assessment interview conducted with the Hospital Director regarding professional ethics indicate that the hospital complies with the relevant professional ethics standards as outlined in Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health. This legislation encompasses various provisions related to the health profession, including the professional and ethical responsibilities that health workers must uphold while serving the community. Notably, Article 31, Section 37 stipulates that health professionals—such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and others—are obligated to practice in accordance with the established professional code of ethics. Furthermore, the Professional Responsibility Regulations detailed in Articles 31 and 39 hold health workers accountable for every action taken in their medical practice, ensuring that these actions align with the applicable medical standards and do not contravene the professional code of ethics. Additionally, Article 41 addresses the importance of Professional Ethics Supervision (President of the Republic of Indonesia [Presiden RI], 2023). In accordance with the research conducted by Nasir and Pranoto (2025), Al-Fatah Hospital has initiated management of its own Electronic Medical Records (EMR) system, implementing stringent data security measures. Regular training sessions for staff are held to ensure that the digitisation of healthcare services prioritises patient privacy and adheres to strict legal compliance (Nasir & Pranoto, 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from the research analysis, it can be concluded that by 2025, Al-Fatah General Hospital Ambon successfully integrated ethical standards and ensured comprehensive fulfilment of patient rights within its managerial framework and service delivery. This achievement is evidenced by a high level of adherence to Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning Health, with self-assessment instruments indicating that patient rights have been duly respected and that the complaint handling system operates with remarkable responsiveness and transparency. The leadership of the hospital plays a pivotal role in fostering an organisational culture that values professional ethics and patient safety above administrative considerations, thereby nurturing a harmonious and trustworthy relationship between healthcare providers and the community. The institution's readiness to embrace digital transformation, alongside ongoing staff competency training, underscores its commitment to delivering quality services that uphold human dignity. Moving forward, it is essential to maintain consistency in upholding these ethical values to adapt to the evolving landscape of national health regulations, ensuring sustainable consumer protection.

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