

Management of Violent Behavior in Patients with Mental Disorders through a Psychiatric Nursing Approach: A Systematic Review

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Submitted 01-06-2026

Received 07-06-2026

Published 08-06-2026

Keywords:

Violent behavior;

Mental disorders;

Psychiatric nursing;

Nursing intervention;

Systematic review.

ABSTRACT

Background: Violent behavior is a common problem among patients with mental disorders and may endanger the patient, other people, and the surrounding environment. It is influenced by emotional disturbances, hallucinations, delusions, psychosocial stress, medication nonadherence, and limited family support. This systematic review aimed to identify violent behavior management strategies for patients with mental disorders through psychiatric nursing approaches based on evidence-based practice. Methods: This review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach. Literature was searched in Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest using the keywords "violent behavior", "aggression", "psychiatric nursing", "mental disorder", and "nursing intervention". Eligible full-text articles in Indonesian or English were published between 2020 and 2025. Results: Effective psychiatric nursing approaches included therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and family support. These interventions helped patients recognize anger warning signs, improve emotional control, reduce aggressiveness, and prevent recurrence. Conclusion: A holistic and continuous psychiatric nursing approach is effective for managing violent behavior and supporting rehabilitation and recovery.

INTRODUCTION

Violent behavior is one of the major problems in mental health care and is frequently found among patients with severe mental disorders, particularly schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other psychotic disorders. Violent behavior may appear as verbal threats, aggressive actions, destructive behavior toward the environment, or actions that endanger the patient and other people. This condition emerges as a maladaptive response to an individual's inability to control emotions, stress, anger, anxiety, or perceptual disturbances such as hallucinations and delusions (Townsend & Morgan, 2020).

Violent behavior is an important concern in mental health services because it directly affects the safety of patients, families, health workers, and the surrounding environment. Patients with violent behavior have a higher risk of social isolation, decreased quality of life, physical restraint, and repeated hospitalization due to relapse of their psychological condition. Aggressive behavior in patients with mental disorders can also create negative

stigma in the community and worsen the patient's social rehabilitation process (World Health Organization [WHO], 2021).

According to the WHO, mental disorders are among the leading causes of global disability, with millions of people experiencing psychosocial disorders that affect their ability to control behavior and emotions. In patients with schizophrenia, violent behavior is often associated with command auditory hallucinations, persecutory delusions, nonadherence to medication, substance abuse, and low family and social support (WHO, 2021). Other literature indicates that biological, psychological, social, and spiritual factors interact in the emergence of aggressive behavior among patients with mental disorders (Videbeck, 2020).

In psychiatric nursing practice, violent behavior requires rapid, appropriate, and comprehensive management. Psychiatric nurses play an important role in assessing violence risk, identifying early signs of anger, and helping patients develop more adaptive coping mechanisms. Nursing interventions focus not only on controlling aggressive behavior but also on improving patients' communication abilities, emotional control, social skills, and problem-solving capacity (Stuart, 2021).

Various psychiatric nursing approaches have been developed to help control violent behavior in patients with mental disorders. These approaches include therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and family education and support. Research shows that empathetic and nonconfrontational therapeutic communication can reduce patients' emotional tension and minimize the risk of aggressive behavior (Hallett et al., 2021). De-escalation techniques have also been shown to prevent the escalation of agitation and reduce the use of physical restraint in patients with mental disorders (NICE, 2020).

Spiritual approaches and family support also contribute significantly to the control of violent behavior. Patients who receive emotional support from their families tend to have better adherence to treatment and a lower risk of relapse. Spiritual approaches such as prayer, dhikr, and religious therapy help patients gain psychological calmness and control emotions and aggressive impulses more effectively (Yosep & Sutini, 2021).

Although various psychiatric nursing interventions have been widely applied in clinical practice, research findings regarding the effectiveness of each approach remain diverse. Therefore, a systematic review is needed to analyze and synthesize evidence-based practice related to the management of violent behavior in patients with mental disorders through psychiatric nursing approaches. The results of this review are expected to become a basis for developing psychiatric nursing practice that is more effective, comprehensive, safety-oriented, and supportive of improved quality of life for patients with mental disorders.

METHODS

This study used a systematic review method based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach. A systematic review method was selected to identify, evaluate, and synthesize research findings on the management of violent behavior in patients with mental disorders through psychiatric nursing approaches in a systematic and comprehensive manner.

The literature search was conducted through several electronic databases, namely Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest. The search strategy used combinations of English and Indonesian keywords, such as "violent behavior", "aggression", "mental disorder", "psychiatric nursing", "violence management", "nursing intervention", and "perilaku kekerasan". Boolean operators were used to broaden or narrow article search results. The operator "AND" was used to combine different keywords and make the search more specific, for example

“violent behavior AND psychiatric nursing”. The operator “OR” was used to identify articles with similar terms, such as “violent behavior OR aggression”, while “NOT” was used to exclude articles that were not aligned with the focus of the study. The literature search was limited to articles published from 2020 to 2025 to obtain the most recent evidence regarding psychiatric nursing interventions for patients with violent behavior.

Inclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria in this study were determined using the PEOS framework, consisting of Population, Exposure, Outcome, and Study Design. The population was patients with mental disorders who experienced violent behavior or risk of violent behavior. The exposure included psychiatric nursing approaches such as therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy, CBT, relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and other psychiatric nursing interventions. Outcomes included reduced aggressive behavior, improved emotional control, reduced risk of violence, improved coping ability, and successful management of violent behavior among patients with mental disorders. Study designs included quantitative, qualitative, quasi-experimental, randomized controlled trial, and mixed-method studies. Based on the PEOS framework, the inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Research articles discussing the management of violent behavior in patients with mental disorders;
- Articles using psychiatric nursing approaches as the main intervention;
- Full-text articles written in Indonesian or English;
- Articles published from 2020 to 2025;
- Articles with quantitative, qualitative, quasi-experimental, randomized controlled trial (RCT), or mixed-method designs.

Exclusion Criteria

- Duplicate articles;
- Non-systematic review articles;
- Articles that were not available in full text;
- Articles that did not discuss psychiatric nursing interventions; and
- Articles that were not relevant to the study focus.

Research Question

- P (Population): Patients with mental disorders who exhibit violent behavior;
- I (Intervention): Psychiatric nursing approaches, including therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy, CBT, relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and other related interventions;
- C (Comparison): Standard care, no specific intervention, or other interventions;
- O (Outcome): Reduction of violent behavior, improvement of emotional control, and reduction of aggressiveness.

Data Selection and Extraction

Article selection was carried out in several stages following the PRISMA flow diagram: identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. During the identification stage, all articles retrieved from the databases were collected and checked for duplicates. The screening stage was then conducted by reviewing article titles and

abstracts according to the research topic. Articles that met the requirements were continued to the eligibility stage by reading the full text to ensure suitability with the objectives of the systematic review.

The quality of selected articles was assessed using critical appraisal instruments from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI Critical Appraisal Tools). The appraisal process was adjusted to each study design, such as the JBI Checklist for Randomized Controlled Trials, the JBI Checklist for Quasi-Experimental Studies, and the JBI Checklist for Qualitative Research. This process assessed methodological validity, clarity of intervention, appropriateness of data analysis, and potential bias in each article. Articles that fulfilled most JBI appraisal indicators were considered eligible for further analysis in this systematic review.

Data from articles that passed selection were extracted using a JBI-based data extraction format. Extracted data included the author name, publication year, country of study, research design, sample characteristics, type of psychiatric nursing intervention, research instruments, study outcomes, and main findings related to the effectiveness of violent behavior management. The collected data were analyzed descriptively by comparing findings across articles to identify the most effective psychiatric nursing interventions for helping control violent behavior in patients with mental disorders.

Data Analysis Workflow

- Literature identification: Articles were searched in Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest using keywords and Boolean operators.
- Article screening: Articles were selected based on titles and abstracts according to the research topic, and duplicate articles were removed.
- Eligibility assessment: Full-text articles were reviewed based on the PEOS framework and the inclusion and exclusion criteria.
- Critical appraisal: Article quality was assessed using the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI Critical Appraisal Tools).
- Data extraction: Eligible article data were extracted using the JBI format, including author, year, design, sample, intervention, and findings.
- Synthesis and analysis: Data were analyzed descriptively by comparing study results to identify the effectiveness of psychiatric nursing approaches in managing violent behavior.
- Presentation of results: The systematic review results were presented in narrative form, an article synthesis table, and a PRISMA flow diagram.

Data Extraction Plan

Data extracted from the articles included the following information:

- Author name
- Publication year
- Country of study
- Research design
- Sample size
- Respondent characteristics
- Type of psychiatric nursing intervention
- Research instrument
- Study outcome
- Main findings

- Study conclusion

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the literature search through Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest, 230 articles were obtained. After removing 40 duplicate articles, 190 articles remained and were screened by title and abstract. During the screening stage, 120 articles were excluded because they were not relevant to the research topic.

A total of 70 full-text articles were then assessed for eligibility based on the PEOS framework and the inclusion and exclusion criteria. During the eligibility stage, 45 articles were excluded: 18 articles were not aligned with the PEOS framework, 12 did not discuss psychiatric nursing interventions, 8 were not available in full text, and 7 did not meet the publication-year criteria.

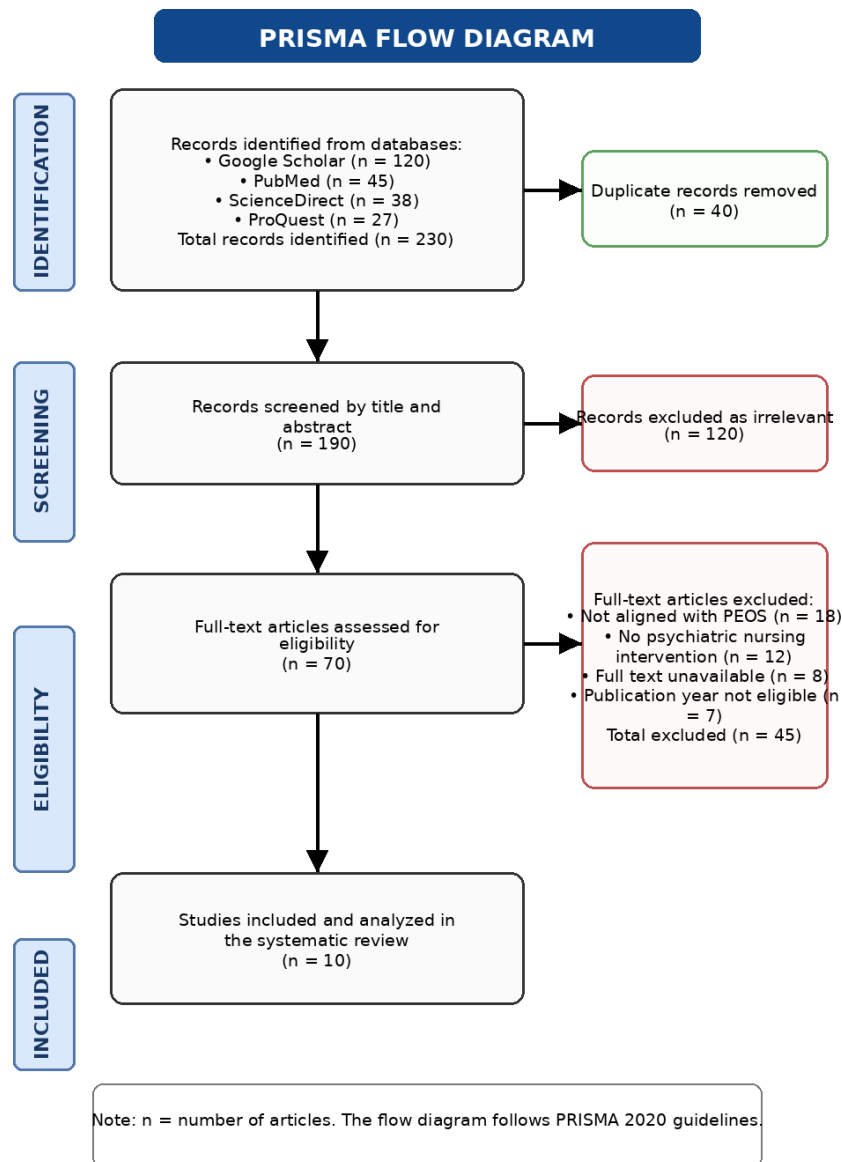


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram

(Source: Literature screening process based on PRISMA 2020 guidelines)

Based on this selection process, 10 articles met the criteria and were analyzed in this systematic review. The selected articles consisted of quantitative studies, quasi-experimental studies, randomized controlled trials (RCTs), and qualitative studies that examined various psychiatric nursing approaches in the management of violent behavior among patients with mental disorders.

The analysis showed that the psychiatric nursing interventions most frequently used to control violent behavior included therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy (GAT), cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), deep-breathing relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and family support. Most studies indicated that these interventions were effective in helping patients recognize signs of anger, improve emotional control, reduce aggressive behavior, and decrease the risk of recurrent violent behavior among patients with mental disorders.

Table 1. Selected research articles

No.	Author & Year	Design	Sample	Psychiatric Nursing Intervention	Outcome	Main Finding
1	Yusuf et al. (2021)	Quasi-experimental	30 patients with schizophrenia	Therapeutic communication	Emotional control	Therapeutic communication was effective in reducing patients' aggressive behavior.
2	Rahmawati & Sari (2022)	RCT	40 patients with mental disorders	De-escalation techniques	Reduction of agitation	De-escalation techniques helped reduce the risk of violent behavior.
3	Hidayat et al. (2020)	Quasi-experimental	25 patients	Group Activity Therapy (GAT)	Social ability	GAT improved patients' ability to control behavior.
4	Putri et al. (2023)	Mixed method	35 patients with schizophrenia	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Reduction of aggressiveness	CBT effectively helped patients control anger.
5	Sulastri et al. (2021)	Quasi-experimental	28 patients	Deep-breathing relaxation	Emotional stability	Relaxation therapy helped reduce emotional tension.
6	Wibowo et al. (2022)	Qualitative	15 patients and families	Family support	Relapse prevention	Family support improved patients' adherence to therapy.
7	Anggraini et al. (2024)	RCT	32 patients	Spiritual approach	Psychological calmness	The spiritual approach reduced patients' aggressive behavior.
8	Kurniawan et al. (2021)	Quasi-experimental	27 patients	Anger management	Impulse control	Anger control training effectively reduced violent behavior.
9	Lestari et al. (2023)	Qualitative	20 patients	Mental health nursing education	Patient understanding	Education improved patients' ability to recognize signs of anger.

No.	Author & Year	Design	Sample	Psychiatric Nursing Intervention	Outcome	Main Finding
10	Fitriani et al. (2024)	Mixed method	30 patients	Therapeutic communication and relaxation combined	Reduction of aggressive behavior	The combination of interventions was more effective in controlling violent behavior.

(Source: Literature synthesis, 2026)

The results of this systematic review show that psychiatric nursing approaches play an important role in managing violent behavior in patients with mental disorders. Based on the 10 articles analyzed, psychiatric nursing interventions such as therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy (GAT), cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and family support were effective in helping control patients' aggressive behavior. This finding indicates that a holistic psychiatric nursing approach can help patients improve emotional control and reduce the risk of violent behavior (Stuart, 2021).

Therapeutic communication was one of the most commonly used interventions in the management of violent behavior. This approach helps build a trusting relationship between nurses and patients so that patients feel safer and are better able to express emotions adaptively. Empathy, calm language, and active listening are important factors in reducing patients' emotional tension. The studies reviewed showed that therapeutic communication can help patients control anger and significantly reduce aggressive behavior. This approach is consistent with interpersonal relationship theory, which states that effective communication can improve psychological stability among patients with mental disorders (Townsend & Morgan, 2020).

De-escalation techniques were also important for preventing increased agitation among patients with mental disorders. These techniques include reducing environmental stimuli, maintaining a safe distance, using nonconfrontational communication, and helping patients calm down gradually. This approach is effective in reducing the risk of physical violence and minimizing the use of restraint. This finding is consistent with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guideline, which states that de-escalation is a primary strategy for preventing aggressive behavior in mental health settings (NICE, 2020).

Group activity therapy and CBT also showed positive results in improving patients' ability to control violent behavior. Group activity therapy helped patients improve social interaction, express emotions appropriately, and build better interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, CBT helped patients identify negative thoughts and change maladaptive responses into more adaptive behavior. This intervention was shown to reduce aggressive impulses and improve patients' ability to solve problems more rationally. Previous literature also states that CBT is effective in helping patients with schizophrenia reduce aggressive behavior through the control of thought patterns and emotional responses (Videbeck, 2020).

Spiritual approaches and relaxation therapy were also found to support emotional stability in patients with mental disorders. Spiritual activities such as prayer, dhikr, and religious approaches provide psychological calmness so that patients are better able to control emotions and reduce aggressive behavior. Deep-breathing relaxation also helps reduce physical and psychological tension. These interventions are relatively easy to apply in psychiatric nursing practice and may serve as supportive therapies in the management of violent behavior. Yosep and Sutini (2021) explain that spiritual approaches can increase inner calmness and help patients develop more adaptive coping mechanisms.

Family support was an important factor in successful control of violent behavior among patients with mental disorders. Families who provide emotional support, medication supervision, and a supportive environment help patients adhere to therapy and reduce the risk of relapse. Conversely, lack of family support can increase psychological stress and worsen patients' emotional condition. Therefore, family education is an essential component of psychiatric nursing approaches. The WHO states that family involvement in the care of patients with mental disorders can improve therapeutic success and accelerate the rehabilitation process (WHO, 2021).

Overall, this systematic review indicates that psychiatric nursing approaches implemented comprehensively and continuously, while involving biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects, can be an effective strategy for managing violent behavior in patients with mental disorders. Psychiatric nursing interventions do not focus solely on controlling aggressive behavior but also help patients improve adaptation, quality of life, and social rehabilitation (Hallett et al., 2021).

Implications for Psychiatric Nursing Practice

The results of this systematic review indicate that psychiatric nursing approaches such as therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, relaxation therapy, and family support can be applied as part of violent behavior management in patients with mental disorders. These interventions can improve patients' emotional control, reduce the risk of aggressive behavior, and enhance the safety of patients and health workers. In addition, the findings can serve as a basis for evidence-based practice in the development of psychiatric nursing services and standards of care in health facilities.

Study Limitations

- The articles used in this review were obtained only from Google Scholar, PubMed, ScienceDirect, and ProQuest.
- The publication period was limited to 2020-2025.
- The research designs, sample sizes, and types of interventions varied across articles, so the findings were heterogeneous.
- The instruments used to measure violent behavior differed across studies, making direct comparison difficult.
- Most articles used quasi-experimental and descriptive designs, so the level of evidence was not as strong as randomized controlled trials.
- This review focused on psychiatric nursing approaches and did not discuss pharmacological therapy in depth.
- Other factors such as culture, environment, severity of mental disorders, and the health service system were not analyzed comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the systematic review, psychiatric nursing approaches are effective in supporting the management of violent behavior in patients with mental disorders. Interventions such as therapeutic communication, de-escalation techniques, group activity therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), relaxation therapy, spiritual approaches, and family support help patients control emotions, reduce aggressive behavior, and decrease the risk of recurrent violent behavior. Psychiatric nursing approaches that are implemented holistically and continuously, and that involve biological, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects, can improve the quality of mental health services and optimally support rehabilitation for patients with mental disorders.

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