

The Role of Nursing Advocacy in Indonesia's Border Regions

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Abstract

Nursing advocacy is an important aspect in ensuring the fulfillment of public health rights, especially in border areas that face geographical, social, and cultural challenges. Nurses have a strategic role in protecting patients, empowering communities, and promoting more equitable health policies. This study used a literature review method, analyzing scientific articles, health organization reports, and related research. The analysis was descriptive in nature to describe the forms of nursing advocacy found. The results of the review show that nursing advocacy in border areas includes four main forms: (1) individual advocacy for the protection of patient rights and facilitation of decision-making; (2) community advocacy for community empowerment and increased health literacy; (3) policy advocacy to encourage policies that are responsive to border needs; and (4) social advocacy to address the social determinants of health. Various challenges such as infrastructure limitations, cultural barriers, and lack of policy support affect the effectiveness of advocacy. The role of nurse advocacy is very important in improving the quality of services and health equity in border areas. Strengthening the capacity of nurses, policy support, and cross-sector collaboration are needed so that nursing advocacy can run optimally.

Keywords: nursing advocacy, border areas, health equity, the role of nurses, community empowerment.

INTRODUCTION

The role of nursing advocacy is one of the main pillars of professional nursing practice, which aims to protect rights, promote independence, and ensure fair access to health services for individuals and communities. Advocacy in nursing is not limited to providing information and decision-making support, but also includes efforts to fight for social justice and policy changes that favor patients and the wider community (Heck et al., 2022). Border areas often face limited access to health facilities, inadequate infrastructure, and uneven distribution of health workers. The presence of nurses who can act as advocates for their health rights is crucial in improving the quality of healthcare services to address complex geographical, social, and cultural challenges (Kennedy, 2020). Ethical values, empathy, and assertive communication are the main foundations of nursing advocacy (Abdulrazeq et al., 2024).

In addition to infrastructure challenges, nurses in border areas also face cultural and linguistic diversity that can hinder effective communication between nurses and patients. Studies show that nurses often have difficulty understanding local languages, resulting in suboptimal nursing care and advocacy (Tage et al., 2021). Border regions often face resource constraints, cultural differences, and linguistic diversity that can hinder communication between health workers and patients (Silva et al., 2025). Additionally, nurses in border areas must also understand cross-border health regulations and rights so that they can provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services to the entire population, including foreign nationals who need emergency health services (Silva et al., 2025).

Nursing advocacy in border areas is also marked by communication challenges and cultural differences. Nurses must be able to overcome language barriers and understand the cultural values of patients in order to build trusting relationships and provide culturally sensitive care (Anzini et al., 2025). Communication limitations and a lack of knowledge about patient rights in border areas can also impact the quality of advocacy provided (Abdulrazeq et al., 2024). Nursing advocacy in border areas does not only focus on individual patients, but also includes efforts to fight for health policies and programs that favor marginalized communities. Nurses play a role in identifying community health needs, providing education, and encouraging community participation in maintaining health.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of nursing advocacy has become even more prominent through education, family empowerment, and cross-sector collaboration to ensure equitable access to health information and services (Akbar et al., 2022).

The Indonesian government has sought to strengthen the role of nurses in border areas through various policies, such as strengthening nursing capacity and developing national referral programs. However, the success of these programs is highly dependent on the readiness of nurses to carry out their advocacy role, including clinical, professional, and communication skills, as well as active involvement in the community (Milanti et al., 2025). However, the implementation of nursing advocacy in border areas still faces various obstacles, such as a lack of training support, limited resources, and a lack of policies that support the equitable distribution of health workers. Additionally, the low level of public knowledge about healthy living behaviors and an unsupportive environmental condition also pose unique challenges for nurses in carrying out their advocacy role (Kennedy, 2020). Based on this background explanation, it is crucial to discuss the form of the nursing advocacy role in Indonesia's border areas.

METHOD

This study used a literature review method by examining various scientific articles and reports related to nursing advocacy in Indonesia's border areas. Data sources were obtained from nursing journals, health organization reports, and relevant previous research results. Descriptive analysis was conducted to identify the forms of advocacy roles carried out by nurses in Indonesia's border areas.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The role of nursing advocacy in Indonesia's border areas is crucial in addressing disparities in access to and quality of health services. Border areas often face geographical challenges, infrastructure limitations, and cultural and linguistic diversity that affect the effectiveness of nursing services (Kennedy, 2020). In this context, nursing advocacy focuses not only on protecting patients' rights, but also on fighting for justice and equitable health services for people living in remote and border areas.

The review results indicate that the role of nursing advocacy in border areas includes several main forms:

1. Individual Advocacy

Individual advocacy in nursing in border areas emphasizes the protection of patients' personal rights and needs. Nurses act as safeguards by ensuring that patients receive safe, quality care that is appropriate to their values and culture (Abbasinia et al., 2019). This is particularly important given that many patients in border areas face language and cultural barriers, requiring nurses to act as communication bridges between patients and other health workers (Kennedy, 2020).

The role of individual advocacy also includes providing clear information about diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis to patients and their families. Nurses must be able to explain various healthcare alternatives and assist patients in making appropriate decisions (Abbasinia et al., 2019). In practice, nurses often have to act as mediators between patients, families, and healthcare teams, especially when there are differences of opinion or misunderstandings due to language and cultural differences (Abbasinia et al., 2019). In practice, nurses often have to act as mediators between patients, families, and healthcare teams, especially when there are differences of opinion or misunderstandings due to language and cultural differences (Tage et al., 2021).

The main challenges in individual advocacy at the border are limited resources, lack of cross-cultural communication training, and minimal institutional support. Nurses often face situations where they must negotiate or defend the interests of patients before administrative or health authorities (Laari & Duma, 2023). This requires good communication skills, empathy, and a deep understanding of local social and cultural conditions (Tage et al., 2021).

In addition, nurses in border areas often have to make quick decisions in emergency situations, with limited access to health facilities. In these circumstances, individual advocacy

becomes crucial to ensure that patients receive their rights, including access to referrals or follow-up services (Kennedy, 2020). This role also includes nurses' efforts to protect patients from discrimination or unfair treatment due to their social, economic, or ethnic status (Anzini et al., 2025).

Improving the capacity of nurses through training in communication, understanding of local culture, and strengthening professional ethics is essential to strengthen individual advocacy at the border. Support from health institutions and policies that favor patient protection are also important factors in the success of individual advocacy.

2. Community Advocacy

Community advocacy by nurses in border areas focuses on empowering communities to improve their collective health. Nurses act as facilitators in identifying community health issues, educating the public, and organizing local groups to actively participate in promotional and preventive efforts (Akbar et al., 2022).

In border contexts, nurses often face geographical challenges, infrastructure limitations, and low levels of public health literacy. Therefore, community advocacy strategies include the use of information technology for education, the involvement of health cadres, and cross-sector collaboration to expand service coverage (Akbar et al., 2022). Nurses also play a role in building public trust in health services, especially in previously underserved areas (Milanti et al., 2025).

Community advocacy requires nurses to understand local social, cultural, and economic dynamics. They must be able to tailor their communication and health intervention approaches to the characteristics of the community, including respecting local values and involving community leaders in every program (Tage et al., 2021). Community empowerment is carried out through cadre training, the formation of support groups, and the strengthening of social networks at the local level. Nurses encourage the community to actively participate in identifying health problems, planning, and implementing community-based solutions. This approach has proven effective in increasing compliance with health protocols and accelerating the early detection of infectious diseases (Akbar et al., 2022).

In addition, community nurses in border areas often serve as liaisons between the community and referral health facilities. They help the community understand administrative procedures and patient rights, and advocate for the special needs of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, pregnant women, and children (Milanti et al., 2025). The role of community advocacy is increasingly important in crisis situations, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, where nurses are at the forefront of education, early detection, and case management at the community level. (Akbar et al., 2022). Collaboration with various parties, such as local governments, community organizations, and educational institutions, is key to the success of community advocacy in border areas (Milanti et al., 2025).

The main challenges in community advocacy are limited human resources, logistics, and policy support. Nurses must be able to innovate and utilize simple technologies, such as social media or instant messaging applications, to disseminate health information widely (Anzini et al., 2025). The success of community advocacy can be measured by increased community participation in health programs, changes in healthy living behaviors, and increased access to and quality of health services in border areas (Akbar et al., 2022). Effective community advocacy can improve health literacy, strengthen social solidarity, and build community resilience to health threats. The role of nurses as facilitators, educators, and community advocates is crucial in creating positive change in border areas.

3. Policy Advocacy

Policy advocacy by nurses in border areas aims to influence the formulation and implementation of health policies that favor marginalized communities. Nurses have an ethical responsibility to ensure that nursing issues and the health needs of border communities are included in the public policy agenda (Scott & Scott, 2021). Policy advocacy by nurses in border areas aims to influence the formulation and implementation of health policies that favor border communities. Nurses can play a role in identifying policy gaps, proposing solutions, and acting

as spokespersons for the community's needs to policymakers (Efendi et al., 2021). This includes advocacy for resource allocation, infrastructure development, and the protection of the rights of patients and health workers.

The role of policy advocacy requires nurses to actively participate in policy forums, both at the local and national levels. They can provide input based on field experience, epidemiological data, and health program evaluation results. This involvement is important to ensure that the resulting policies are relevant and responsive to real needs in the field (Scott & Scott, 2021). Policy advocacy also includes nurses' efforts to fight for legal protection and regulations that support nursing practice, including recognition of the role of nurses in the national health system (Efendi et al., 2021).

Nurses also play a role in promoting policy reforms that support capacity building for nursing staff in border areas. For example, advocacy for continuing education, special incentives, and legal protection for nurses working in remote areas. (Laari & Duma, 2023) Policies that support the development of nurses' competencies and welfare will have a direct impact on the quality of health services in border areas.

In Indonesia, the main challenges in policy advocacy at the border are the lack of health infrastructure, uneven distribution of health workers, and minimal attention to the specific needs of border communities (Kennedy, 2020). Other challenges in policy advocacy include limited access for nurses to decision-makers, lack of integrated data, and minimal representation of nurses in the health bureaucracy. Therefore, collective efforts are needed to strengthen the bargaining position of nurses through professional organizations, advocacy networks, and strategic partnerships with other stakeholders (Scott & Scott, 2021).

Cross-sector coordination is crucial in policy advocacy, given the complexity of health issues in border areas involving various ministries and agencies (Efendi et al., 2021). Effective policy advocacy can promote the creation of a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable health system in border areas. The role of nurses as agents of change in health policy is essential to address inequalities and improve the health status of border communities.

4. Social Advocacy

Social advocacy in nursing in border areas emphasizes nurses' efforts to address the social determinants of health that affect community well-being. Nurses act as agents of social change by identifying and advocating for issues such as poverty, discrimination, access to education, and gender inequality that impact health (Laari & Duma, 2023).

In border areas, social inequality is often exacerbated by geographical, economic, and cultural factors. Nurses must be able to advocate for vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, minorities, and poor communities, so that they have equal rights to access health services (Abbasinia et al., 2019). Nurses in border areas often witness firsthand the socio-economic impacts that worsen the health conditions of communities. They strive to build collective awareness about the importance of social justice and the right to health through education, campaigns, and collaboration with civil society organizations (Akbar et al., 2022). Social advocacy also includes efforts to strengthen solidarity and social cohesion amid cultural diversity and geographical challenges. These efforts also include nurses' efforts to educate the public about health rights, empower communities to fight discrimination, and fight for more equitable social change (Abbasinia et al., 2019).

Social advocacy strategies involve a cross-sectoral approach, such as collaborating with educational institutions, religious organizations, and local governments to address social barriers that hinder access to health services. Nurses can also facilitate dialogue between community groups to reduce stigma and discrimination against vulnerable groups. (Milanti et al., 2025) Nurses can also utilize social media and information technology to expand the reach of social advocacy (Akbar et al., 2022).

The main challenges in social advocacy are cultural resistance, limited resources, and a lack of policy support for marginalized groups. Nurses must have cultural sensitivity, communication

skills, and the ability to build strong social networks to overcome these barriers (Heck et al., 2022).

Social advocacy carried out by nurses in border areas contributes to the creation of a more inclusive, fair, and healthy environment. By fighting for social justice, nurses not only improve the quality of life of individuals and communities, but also strengthen the foundations of a national health system oriented towards equity and sustainability.

CONCLUSION

Nursing advocacy in Indonesia's border areas is an important component in ensuring the fulfillment of the health rights of communities living in complex geographical, social, and cultural conditions. A review of the literature shows that nurses carry out four main forms of advocacy, namely individual, community, policy, and social advocacy. These four forms of advocacy complement each other in efforts to improve access, quality of services, and health equity in border areas.

Nurses play a strategic role as protectors of patient rights, facilitators of community empowerment, agents of policy change, and agents of social transformation. However, various challenges still hinder the effectiveness of advocacy, such as limited infrastructure, cross-cultural communication barriers, lack of training, uneven distribution of health workers, and minimal policy attention to the needs of border communities.

Therefore, comprehensive efforts are needed to strengthen nurses' capacity through ongoing training in cross-cultural communication, advocacy ethics, and policy leadership. In addition, the government needs to increase policy support through adequate resource allocation, health infrastructure development, and more equitable distribution of health workers so that advocacy can be carried out optimally. Cross-sector collaboration with local governments, community organizations, and educational institutions is also key to strengthening community and social advocacy, while increasing community participation in health programs. Empowering local communities and utilizing information technology are also necessary to overcome geographical constraints and improve public health literacy. With these steps, the effectiveness of nursing advocacy in border areas is expected to increase and have a real impact on the equitable distribution of health services.

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