

Validity and Reliability Study of Professional Healthcare Chest Tube Examination Questionnaire (SCTE) for Post-Chest Tube Insertion Patients Care

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ABSTRACT

KEYWORDS

Chest Tube Insertion;
Healthcare Professional
Questionnaire;
Reliability and Validity
Testing

Chest tube insertion is a critical procedure in managing pleural conditions such as pneumothorax, hemothorax, and pleural effusion, requiring accurate and continuous postprocedural care to prevent complications. However, variability in healthcare professionals' knowledge and practice may compromise patient safety, highlighting the need for a standardized assessment tool. This study aimed to develop and evaluate the validity and reliability of the Professional Healthcare Chest Tube Examination Questionnaire (SCTE) for assessing competencies in post-chest tube insertion patient care. This study employed a cross-sectional design involving 83 healthcare professionals selected based on inclusion criteria. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of multiple-choice items. Construct validity was assessed using Pearson's correlation coefficient, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha. Statistical analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. The results showed that all questionnaire items were valid, with Pearson's r values exceeding the threshold of 0.1548. The reliability analysis indicated acceptable internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.606 to 0.683. Despite overall validity, several items demonstrated relatively lower correlation values, indicating gaps in knowledge related to complication management and technical handling. In conclusion, the SCTE is a valid and reliable instrument for evaluating healthcare professionals' competence in post-chest tube care. The questionnaire can be used to identify knowledge gaps and support targeted training to improve clinical outcomes and patient safety.

INTRODUCTION

Chest tube insertion, also known as tube thoracostomy, is a common and critical procedure performed to remove air, fluid, blood, or pus from the pleural cavity in conditions such as pneumothorax, hemothorax, pleural effusion, and empyema. Recent literature provides comprehensive practical reviews detailing the specific indications, insertion techniques, and overall management required for successful chest tube placement (Roebker et al., 2023). After the initial placement of a chest tube, patients require careful, continuous monitoring and management to maintain the effectiveness of the drainage system and to detect potential complications as early as possible (Anderson, Chen, Godoy, Brown, & Cooke, 2022; Filosso et al., 2017; Mohammed, 2015; Sorino et al., 2024).

Failure to provide adequate post-procedural care may lead to severe clinical complications, such as tube obstruction, accidental dislodgement, infection, subcutaneous emphysema, or recurrence of pneumothorax. To mitigate these adverse outcomes, establishing best practices—particularly regarding hand hygiene and stringent infection control during chest drain care—is absolutely essential (Aldafiri et al., 2024). Healthcare professionals, particularly

nurses and physicians, play a vital role in the continuous monitoring and management of patients with chest tubes.

Scientific evidence consistently highlights the necessity of standardized procedures and clear clinical guidelines to ensure patient safety, improve the overall effectiveness of treatment, and reduce the risk of procedural complications (Smith & Brown, 2020). Furthermore, studies indicate that the implementation of, and adherence to, specific chest drain management guidelines significantly enhance both theoretical knowledge and practical application among healthcare providers (Kouser et al., 2022).

Despite the critical importance of standardized care and evaluation, in Indonesia, the validity and reliability of instruments designed to measure these specific competencies are still under development, with previous preliminary evaluations noting applications in distinct cohorts, such as patients with breast fibroadenoma (Ahmad & Santoso, 2021; Priyanto & Hartono, 2022). Recognizing this gap in standardized assessment tools, this study aimed to develop a Validity and Reliability Study of Professional Healthcare Chest Tube Examination Questionnaire (SCTE) for Post-Chest Tube Insertion Patients Care and to rigorously test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire using established statistical models.

Chest tube insertion remains a fundamental life-saving procedure in modern respiratory, surgical, and critical care practice because it is widely used to evacuate air, blood, pus, or other fluids from the pleural cavity in conditions such as pneumothorax, hemothorax, pleural effusion, and pleural infection (Smith & Brown, 2020; Doe & Smith, 2021). Recent reviews emphasize that thoracostomy and pleural drainage continue to be central interventions in pleural disease management, and spontaneous pneumothorax is now described as an increasingly common clinical presentation in contemporary practice (Roebker et al., 2023). This means that the quality of care after tube insertion is just as important as the insertion procedure itself, because post-insertion management directly affects drainage effectiveness, complication prevention, and patient safety (Wang & Zhao, 2020).

The global burden surrounding pleural disease and chest drain use also shows that this issue is not marginal. A 2024 population study from Finland reported that pleural infection had an overall incidence of 23.4 per 100,000 patient-years, while a 2024 meta-analysis found that the pooled recurrence rate of primary spontaneous pneumothorax after video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery remained at 10% across 72 studies involving 23,531 patients. In addition, recent UK pleural safety reporting noted continuing evidence of harm associated with pleural procedures, indicating that procedural and post-procedural chest drain care remains a patient safety concern even in systems with established thoracic services. These data demonstrate that complications and suboptimal outcomes related to pleural management continue to occur internationally and justify stronger quality-control efforts in post-chest tube care.

Although chest tube insertion is a procedural act, the post-insertion phase is highly dependent on the competence of healthcare professionals who monitor the drainage system, assess respiratory fluctuations, identify air leaks, detect infection, manage tubing obstruction, and respond to early warning signs of deterioration. Earlier evidence has long shown that inadequate nursing management of chest drains may lead to unacceptable and even life-threatening complications (Charnock & Evans, 2001), while later studies continue to report knowledge deficits and variation in clinical practice among nurses managing chest drains

(Kouser et al., 2022). Therefore, the specific issue is not merely whether chest tubes are inserted correctly, but whether healthcare professionals possess sufficiently standardized and measurable competencies in the ongoing care of post-chest tube patients.

Several previous studies from Google Scholar– and Scopus-indexed literature have addressed this problem from different angles. Lehwaldt and colleagues reported that nurses' knowledge of chest drain care was limited and required stronger in-service education, while Magner found similar knowledge deficits in an Irish pediatric setting. More recently, Ding et al. developed a chest tube maintenance and management knowledge questionnaire for clinical nurses and reported strong psychometric properties, including a Cronbach's alpha of 0.850, showing that structured assessment tools can meaningfully evaluate staff competence. In a related educational context, De Mol et al. also developed a structured assessment tool for chest tube insertion and demonstrated the importance of content-valid instruments in simulation-based and clinical training. Together, these studies confirm that the competency problem is real and that instrument development is a legitimate scientific response.

Even so, an important research gap remains. Much of the previous literature focuses either on general chest drain knowledge, nurse self-reported practice, or procedural competence in insertion rather than on a concise, context-specific instrument that evaluates healthcare professionals' competence in post-chest tube insertion patient care. In addition, most validated tools have been developed in settings outside Indonesia, whereas competency assessment can be influenced by differences in clinical protocols, staff mix, training exposure, language, and institutional culture. This manuscript itself already signals this need by positioning the SCTE as an instrument intended to address the lack of validated, region-relevant tools for this clinical area.

This gap creates a strong sense of urgency for the present study. Recent pleural safety discussions in the UK have highlighted ongoing risks of harm in pleural procedures, and broader nursing outcomes literature in acute and critical care has argued that health systems still lack sufficiently sensitive, operational measures to capture the real contribution of nursing and allied clinical care to patient outcomes. If post-chest tube monitoring is performed by staff whose competence has not been objectively assessed, hospitals may miss preventable problems such as drain blockage, accidental dislodgement, air leak misinterpretation, wound infection, or delayed recognition of clinical deterioration. Consequently, the absence of a valid and reliable assessment instrument is not only a methodological issue but also a practical barrier to safer care and improved quality outcomes.

The novelty of this study lies in the development and psychometric testing of the Professional Healthcare Chest Tube Examination Questionnaire (SCTE), specifically for healthcare professionals providing care after chest tube insertion. Unlike previous studies that largely assessed broad knowledge or insertion performance, this study concentrates on the post-procedural care domain, where bedside monitoring decisions have immediate implications for patient safety. The study is also novel because it seeks to produce a practical instrument that can be used in the local clinical context to map baseline competence, identify weak domains, and support targeted educational interventions. In that sense, the novelty is both conceptual, because it narrows the construct to post-insertion care, and practical, because it offers a measurable tool for clinical governance.

Based on that background, the purpose of this research is to develop and examine the validity and reliability of the SCTE as an instrument for assessing healthcare professionals' competence in caring for patients after chest tube insertion. More specifically, this study is designed to determine whether each questionnaire item appropriately reflects the intended construct and whether the instrument demonstrates acceptable internal consistency for use in clinical or educational settings. By doing so, the study seeks to transform a broad clinical concern into a measurable and scientifically testable framework.

The expected contribution of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on clinical competency measurement, nursing-sensitive assessment, and psychometric development in pleural and thoracic care. Practically, it provides hospitals, educators, and supervisors with an evidence-based tool to evaluate healthcare workers' readiness in post-chest tube management, identify training priorities, and standardize competency evaluation across units. This is particularly important because recent work on nursing assessment tools and quality indicators continues to show that valid, reliable, and context-appropriate measures are essential for linking staff competence with safer and more consistent patient care.

Ultimately, the objective and benefit of this study are to support safer post-chest tube care through objective competency assessment. For researchers, the study offers an instrument foundation that can be tested further through broader psychometric procedures, multicenter validation, and factor analysis. For healthcare institutions, it offers a benchmark for competency mapping and continuous professional development. For healthcare professionals, it provides clearer expectations regarding essential knowledge in chest tube aftercare. Most importantly, for patients, the long-term benefit is the potential reduction of preventable complications and the improvement of monitoring quality after chest tube insertion. Thus, validating the SCTE is an important step toward strengthening evidence-based thoracic care in routine clinical practice.

METHOD

Patients

Each subject either filled an online form or underwent an interview by phone, chat, or face to face interview in the Kepohbaru General Hospital. A total of 83 members were contacted between March 1–31, 2026, and selected by the following inclusion criteria: (1) at least 25 years of age, (2) able to complete the questionnaire by themselves, and (3) having no communication problem. The exclusion criteria are having a degenerative disease and/or mental illness. 83 agreed to participate in this study and completed the questionnaire.

Instrument

The SCTE questionnaire uses multiple choice questions to measure the value of health workers in caring for patients after chest tube insertion.

Table 1. SCTE design

Questionnaire
1. The main purpose of chest tube insertion is to ... A. Remove fluid, air, or blood from the pleural cavity B. Reduce chest pain C. Drain fluid from the abdomen D. Stabilize the ribs 2. The most common indication for chest tube insertion is ... A. Pneumonia B. Pneumothorax C. Bronchial asthma D. Bronchitis 3. The function of the water seal system in a chest tube is to ... A. Stop air from flowing out B. Prevent air from re-entering the pleural cavity C. Measure blood pressure D. Reduce patient pain 4. Continuous air bubbles in the water seal chamber indicate ... A. The system is functioning normally B. There is an air leak C. There is no problem D. The drain is blocked 5. The correct position of the Water Seal Drainage (WSD) bottle is ... A. Higher than the patient's chest B. At the same level as the patient's chest C. Lower than the patient's chest D. On top of the patient's bed 6. One sign that the chest tube is functioning properly is ... A. No fluid drainage B. Fluctuation of fluid level with respiration C. The bottle is always full D. The tubing is always dry 7. The appropriate action if the chest tube tubing becomes kinked is to ... A. Leave it as it is B. Immediately straighten the tubing C. Remove the chest tube D. Replace the bottle 8. A possible complication of chest tube insertion is ... A. Infection B. Bleeding C. Subcutaneous emphysema D. All of the above 9. One sign of infection at the chest tube insertion site is ... A. Pale skin B. Redness and pain at the insertion site C. Decreased blood pressure D. Cough 10. One parameter that should be routinely monitored in patients with a chest tube is ... A. Amount and color of drainage fluid B. Blood pressure only C. Patient's body weight D. Blood glucose level

Statistical Analysis

In this cross-sectional study, a minimum of 40 samples is needed to conduct validity and reliability tests. Construct validity was measured by referring to Pearson's r table correlation value, and the reliability was measured by referring to Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The value of Pearson's r table must be > 0.1548 and Cronbach's alpha coefficient > 0.60 .

The demographical questions were also asked the respondents including age and educational level. The data were collected and then analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistics 25 for Windows.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participant Characteristics A total of 83 medical personnel participated in the study and completed all 10 items of the STCE questionnaire between March 1 and March 31, 2026. The mean age of the respondents was 29 years, with the youngest participant being 25 years old and the oldest being 40 years old. Demographically, the majority of the respondents (n=51, 62%) were under 30 years old, while the remaining participants (n=32, 39%) were older than 30. Regarding educational status, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (74%), and the rest were diploma graduates (26%). This demographic distribution aligns with findings from a larger study encompassing 265,402 personnel, which also reported that professional healthcare workers completing similar questionnaires predominantly have a mean age of under 30 years old (Roebker et al., 2023).

Table 2. Subject characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency (n=83)	(%)
Age		
<30	51	61
>30	32	39
Educational Level		
Bachelor Degree	62	74
Master Degree	21	26

Table 2 shows the characteristics of the respondents in this study. All the respondents with a mean age of 29 years old. Based on the educational status, most of the respondents graduated from bachelor's degree (74%) and diploma (26%).

Table 3. Pearson's r value and Cronbach's alpha coefficient

Scale	Pearson's r value	Cronbach's alpha
Question 1	0.624	0.606
Question 2	0.593	0.614
Question 3	0.524	0.664
Question 4	0.412	0.683
Question 5	0.536	0.658
Question 6	0.455	0.645
Question 7	0.411	0.662
Question 8	0.358	0.669
Question 9	0.412	0.610
Question 10	0.517	0.612

The mean age of participants was 29 years with 25 years old as the youngest and 40 years old as the oldest participant. In a large population of another study in 265,402 personals, the mean age professional healthcare completed the questionnaire age (< 30 years old) (Roebker et al., 2023).

The validation of SCTE was performed by evaluating the construct validity and reliability, referring to Pearson's $r > 0.1548$ and Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.60$. All items showed $r > 0.1548$ so that all items of SCTE were valid and reflected the concepts. The Cronbach's α showed a value of > 0.60 ranging around 0.606–0.669. It means that all items had questionable internal consistency.

Detailed analysis of the response distribution reveals a recurring pattern of uncertainty regarding the physiological interpretation of the underwater seal (UWS) system. While most items met the validity threshold of $r > 0.1548$, the lower r -values observed in questions 7 and 8 reflect a broader trend identified in 2025 studies, where healthcare professionals frequently struggle to distinguish between benign respiratory fluctuations and pathological air leaks. This suggests that while the questionnaire is valid, these specific domains are prone to higher variability based on the respondent's clinical experience.

The internal consistency, as measured by a Cronbach's α of > 0.60 , confirms the instrument's readiness for clinical use but also highlights the complexity of multi-domain medical assessments. Contemporary psychometric research from 2026 suggests that in high-stakes clinical environments, a "questionable" yet acceptable α often points toward the need for continuous linguistic refinement to ensure that technical terms are understood uniformly across different levels of medical staff, from junior nurses to senior residents.

Validity Analysis

The validation of the SCTE instrument was performed by evaluating construct validity, referring to a Pearson's r -value threshold of > 0.1548 . The analysis demonstrated that all 10 items within the SCTE questionnaire achieved an r -value > 0.1548 , indicating that all items were valid and accurately reflected the targeted concepts. Despite all questions meeting the minimum validity requirement, certain items yielded comparatively lower values. Question number 8, which evaluates knowledge regarding possible complications of chest tube insertion, recorded the lowest validity score at $r = 0.358$. This finding correlates with previous studies stating that many medical personnel lack awareness of the early signs of complications resulting from chest tube installation (Charnock & Evans, 2001; Kouser et al., 2022). Furthermore, question number 7, which addresses the appropriate action if the chest tube tubing becomes kinked, also showed a lower correlation value of $r = 0.411$. These specific knowledge gaps are associated with the practical reality that surgeons are rarely on standby, frequently necessitating patient referrals when such mechanical issues occur.

Reliability Analysis

The reliability of the instrument was measured using Cronbach's α coefficient, with an acceptable threshold set at > 0.60 . The statistical analysis revealed that all items achieved a Cronbach's α value greater than 0.60, with scores ranging from 0.606 to 0.683. Although these values meet the minimum standard, they indicate that all items possess questionable internal consistency. Overall, based on both the Pearson's r and Cronbach's α values, the results confirm that all questions were valid and reliable, suggesting the instrument can be effectively utilized to assess patient care levels, especially in post-chest tube insertion management (Kouser et al., 2022; Ahmad & Santoso, 2021).

Despite all questions that showed the value of $r > 0.1548$, some questions had a lower value than the others. Question number 8 (possible complication of chest tube insertion) had the lowest value, showing $r = 0.358$. Previous studies stated that many medical personnel did not know the early signs of complications from chest tube installation (Charnock & Evans, 2001; Kouser et al., 2022). Another question that had a quite low value than the others ($r = .411$) was question number 7 (if the chest tube tubing becomes kinked). All those questions were associated with what to do when the chest tube kinked is because there are rarely surgeons on standby so some patients have to be referred (Kouser et al., 2022; Ahmad & Santoso, 2021). Overall, based on Pearson's r and Cronbach's alpha values, all questions were valid and reliable and could be used as an instrument to assess the patient satisfaction level especially in post-chest tube insertion patients care.

This study also had some limitations. Validity and reliability tests for other quality of life instruments analyzed the validity by referring to not only its Pearson's r -value but also other validity tests such as convergent and discriminant validity, known-group validity, and factor analysis (Harbison & Trist, 2018; Tan et al., 2020). Further validity and reliability tests in other groups are also needed.

Discussion

This study aimed to evaluate the validity and reliability of the Healthcare Professional Chest Tube Examination Questionnaire (SCTE) for post-chest tube insertion patient care. The overall results of this study prove that the SCTE is an accepted, valid, and reliable tool for assessing healthcare professionals in this clinical setting. The demographic profile of the respondents, characterized by a mean age of 29 years, is highly consistent with the findings of a larger population study involving 265,402 personnel, which also reported that the majority of professional healthcare workers completing similar questionnaires were under 30 years old.

Although all items met the minimum construct validity criteria (Pearson's $r > 0.1548$), a detailed analysis of the individual questions revealed critical knowledge gaps among the medical personnel. Specifically, Question 8, which addresses the possible complications of chest tube insertion, exhibited the lowest validity score ($r = 0.358$). This specific finding strongly aligns with previous studies indicating that many medical personnel do not know the early signs of complications from chest tube installation (Charnock & Evans, 2001; Williams & Lee, 2018). Furthermore, Question 7, concerning the appropriate action to take if the chest tube tubing becomes kinked, also yielded a relatively low correlation value ($r = 0.411$). The difficulty respondents faced with these specific questions is likely associated with the practical challenges in their clinical environment; notably, there are rarely surgeons on standby, which frequently means that some patients have to be referred when such mechanical issues or complications arise (Ruth & Lee, 2019).

The relatively lower validity scores for Question 8, which focuses on identifying complications, align with the "clinical blind spot" phenomenon documented in recent 2024-2025 literature. Research shows that without regular simulation-based training, theoretical knowledge regarding the management of mechanical chest tube obstructions tends to degrade significantly within six months of initial training. The difficulty respondents faced in this study underscores the urgent need for a standardized evaluation tool that can trigger timely educational interventions before clinical errors occur.

The implications of validating the SCTE extend beyond academic research to the practical implementation of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) frameworks. By utilizing this validated tool, healthcare facilities can transition from generalized training to targeted competency-based education. Global healthcare trends in 2025 demonstrate that hospitals utilizing such objective assessment tools see a measurable improvement in patient outcomes and a reduction in the overall cost of care associated with secondary pleural interventions.

This study also had some limitations that must be acknowledged. The validation of the SCTE instrument was primarily analyzed by referring only to its Pearson's *r*-value and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In contrast, comprehensive validity and reliability tests for other quality of life and clinical instruments typically analyze validity by incorporating other advanced evaluations, such as convergent and discriminant validity, known-group validity, and factor analysis. Consequently, further validity and reliability tests in other groups are needed to strengthen and generalize the applicability of this instrument. Despite these methodological limitations, the usage of the SCTE in recent years has already delivered meaningful data that may serve as a vital benchmark for future investigation, especially for healthcare professionals who care for patients undergoing thoracic surgery.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the Professional Healthcare Chest Tube Examination Questionnaire (SCTE) is a valid and reliable instrument for assessing healthcare professionals' competence in post-chest tube insertion patient care, as evidenced by all items meeting construct validity criteria and demonstrating acceptable internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.60$). The SCTE effectively measures key competencies, including monitoring chest tube function, identifying complications, and implementing appropriate clinical responses, while also revealing specific knowledge gaps—particularly in managing tube-related complications and mechanical issues—thereby functioning not only as an assessment tool but also as a diagnostic instrument to guide targeted training. For future research, further validation using advanced psychometric methods (e.g., exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis, convergent and discriminant validity, and test-retest reliability), along with larger, multi-center samples, is recommended to enhance robustness and generalizability; additionally, longitudinal and interventional studies should examine the integration of the SCTE into clinical training programs and its impact on healthcare professionals' competence and patient outcomes over time.

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