



## A Health Education About Self-Prevention Of Covid-19 Transmission

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### **ABSTRACT**

Along with the widespread Covid-19 pandemic, limitless information related to the virus, the pandemic, and their impacts spread wildly either. It may cause not only misunderstanding, but also confusion, anxiety, and fear among people. This community service aimed to share the proper and sufficient information about the pandemic based on valid references to raise people awareness, increase their understanding about the pandemic, and to show them ways to differ valid information from the invalid ones. The health education was carried out door-to-door and in informal setting. During the activities the respondents received the printed material, explanation about the material, answers for their questions, and face masks. The activity ran smoothly and the respondents took part actively. Therefore, health care personnel are supposed to spread valid information about the Covid-19 pandemic to wider communities to create better understanding and avoid any misunderstanding among people in general.

Key words: covid-19; health education; preventive effort

### **INTRODUCTION**

The human coronavirus disease 2019 or well-known as Covid-19 has undeniably influenced human kind globally. The pandemic that firstly discovered in Wuhan China by the end of 2019 has subsequently spread worldwide only in a few months. In Indonesia, the number of the cases even increased dramatically day by day (Gumelar, 2022). Covid-19 has changed various aspects of people living around the globe (Lawrie et al., 2020). It has great impact on human's health not only physically, but also psychologically, socially, and even financially. It changes the way people take care of their personal hygienes. It changes the way people work. It changes the way people study. It changes the way people interact to each other. To say the least, it dramatically changes the way people face the world. After the pandemic, people see the world in a quite different frame.

As happen to so many people in various countries, the lives of millions of people in Indonesia have already been upended. Lockdowns and school closure were greatly affecting education, mental health, and access to health services of children as well as their parents (UNICEF, 2020a). During this period, various information about the virus as well as the preventive steps to avoid it were shared massively. Unfortunately, not all of these informations are correct. 'Misinformation and a lack of information during a health crisis can spread paranoia, fear, and stigma, and result in people not being protected or doing things that can hurt themselves and others' (UNICEF, 2020b). Therefore, providing sufficient information about 'what to know about Covid-19' and 'what to do to avoid Covid-19' to societies is crucially needed.

The information that people, especially in Indonesia, need to know are what Covid-19 is, how deadly it is and who are most at risk, how it spreads, its symptoms, and the preventive efforts such as proper hand washing, cough etiquette, social distancing, face mask using, and so on (Gray et al., 2020; Iboi et al., 2021).

The first is ‘what is Covid-19?’. Covid-19 stands for Corona Virus Disease 2019. UNICEF (2020b) defines it as ‘a new virus linked to the same family of viruses as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold’. That is why the virus is sometimes called as SARS-CoV-2. However, COVID-19 is much more dangerous than SARS since it is highly transmissible and its symptoms are mild (Washington Post Staff, 2020). The symptoms of Covid-19 are very similar to influenza such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. However, ‘in more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties’ (UNICEF, 2020c).

The next important issue is ‘how deadly it is and who is most at risk’. Public health officials actually confirm that Covid-19 is less deadly than SARS, but once again, Covid-19 spreads more easily than SARS. Besides, older people, especially with diabetes and high blood pressure, have higher risk. In United states, data also shows that men are more at risk than women (Washington Post Staff, 2020).

The next information that is also very necessary is the way the virus spreads. The virus primarily spreads from person to person through the droplets a person produces when talking or coughing (Washington Post Staff, 2020). Unfortunately, not all infected persons will show any symptom of Covid-19, but they still can spread the virus. Meanwhile, the virus can only survive on surfaces for several hours and can easily be killed by any kind of disinfectant (UNICEF, 2020c).

To avoid the risk of infection, the following precautions are suggested to be done: (1) wash hands frequently using water and soap, or an alcohol-based hand rub; (2) cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing (dispose the used tissue immediately); (3) avoid close contact with other people with cold or flu-like symptoms; and (4) get any medical care as soon as possible if the symptoms appear (UNICEF, 2020c).

The following steps are the proper procedure to wash hands: (1) wet hands with running water; (2) apply enough soap; (3) scrub all surfaces of the hands for at least 20 seconds; (4) rinse thoroughly with running water; (5) and dry hands with clean cloth. ‘Wash your hands often, especially before eating; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; and going to the bathroom’ (UNICEF, 2020c).

The next frequently asked question is the importance of wearing a mask. The use of a medical mask is strongly recommended to people who show respiratory symptoms. The reason is actually to protect other people. However, since not all infected person will show the symptoms, mask can also be used by healthy-looking people to prevent any transmission. In addition, the use of mask must be combined with frequent hand washing, covering sneezing and coughs, as well as avoiding close contact with other people (UNICEF, 2020c).

There are also some other important information concerning Covid-19 that will not be explained in this part. However, all important information can give great beneficial if being shared to

people properly. Proper information can reduce people's misunderstanding and ignorance toward Covid-19 pandemic.

This community service was a health education that was conducted to share the information that highly needed by the society in order to increase people awareness toward the danger that can be caused by Covid-19 and reduce any misunderstanding toward Covid-19. As stated by Gray et al. (2020), health education is urgently needed in urgent condition like Covid-19 pandemic, especially before any specific drug and vaccine could be formulated.

## **METHODS**

This community service was conducted on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 21-22, 2020. It was mainly a door-to-door health education conducted in an informal setting. During this activity, the health education team distributed leaflets containing various information about Covid-19, explained the information presented in the leaflets, answered various questions from the targeted people, distributed face masks, and demonstrating proper hand washing. The targeted participants of this community service were people living or working at Kraton Village, Pekalongan.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

During the health education, the participants were given leaflets containing various information about Covid-19 pandemic, especially various procedures to be done to stay clean and healthy to reduce the possible transmission of the virus. The providers also explained the informations to the participants. The information being shared was mainly about the what Covid-19 is actually, how deadly it is, who are most at risk, how it spreads, how people should protect themselves, what are the symptoms of Covid-19, how to avoid the virus transmission, the most appropriate way to wash hands, the importance of wearing face masks, the best food to eat, etc.

Another objective of the program was to educate the participants to search only the valid information about Covid-19 pandemic and its implication. The participants were shown several trusted sources to get the correct information. Besides, the participants were also given the fundamental understanding of the pandemic, so that in the future, they could differentiate by themselves which information was correct and which one was incorrect or inappropriate.

On the health education, some participants enthusiastically asked question about the issue. The most frequently asked questions were 'should they change all of their clothes and take a bath everytime they go outside their house?', 'is wearing mask really important and effective to avoid Covid-19?', 'how could I differentiate any symptom of ordinary flu and symptom of Covid-19?', 'can this pandemic disappear someday?', 'is Covid-19 really that deadly?', and so on.

These people's enthusiasm gave a good sign that the goals of the program were achieved. This health education was expected to be able to increase people awareness to do preventive efforts in reducing the transmission of Covid-19 which, at that moment, had neither particular drug to cure not vaccines. Though its effectiveness was not measured, it was expected that the result was effective since health education is generally effective in improving certain condition such as the one conducted by Najman et al. (2020) who successfully conducted a health education that significantly reduced people's anxiety about Covid-19 transmission. Similar health education was conducted by Syamson et al. (2021), and it was significantly reduced elderly's anxiety due to Covid-19. In addition, Iboi et al. (2021) measured the effect of the health education they

conducted in the United States. The results showed that it was effective in reducing the cumulative and daily mortality rate of Covid-19 cases in the country.

On the other hand, all of the prepared masks were distributed successfully. The participants enthusiastically took the masks. Beside distributing the masks, the providers explained about the proper way to wear the masks, showed and explained some different types of face masks, and explained how to wash reusable masks. Moreover, they also explained the importance of using face masks in public areas because the most important thing was to make sure that the participants would wear the masks appropriately, not only accepted and put them aside.



Figure 1. Leaflets and face masks distribution during the health education



Figure 2. Demonstration of hand washing with soap and running water

However, despite the enthusiasm showed by the participants, there were some people who still showed their ignorance. This finding might be used to make some betterment if the similar type of program will be carried out in the future.

## CONCLUSSION

The community service in the form of health education to the people of Kraton Village, Pekalongan, ran smoothly. The participants received the leaflets and listened to the explanation thoroughly. Besides, they could demonstrate the appropriate procedure of hand washing well. Lastly, it was expected that the health education could be fruitful for all the participants and the virus transmission could be reduced.

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