

Ways to Cope Depression During Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to find the strategy to cope with depression during Covid-19 pandemic, the factors affecting depression during Covid-19 pandemic and the government efforts in solving this issue. This is done by using the qualitative method which is literature reviews with articles and journals that is related to depression in the midst of pandemic. The result of this literature review is that there are four main risks that affect depression such as social distancing and isolation, economic recession, stress and trauma for health workers as well as stigma and discrimination. Avoiding smartphones and keeping oneself busy may help overcome depression. The government has also made efforts regarding this issue by providing psychological consulting assistance services and releasing Health Support Guidelines Mental and Psychosocial in a Pandemic Covid-19 guidebook.

Keywords: Depression, Covid-19, Mental Health Problems, Pandemic

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 or better known as CoronaVirus is a virus that first appeared in December 2019 in Wuhan, China and had spread across the world including Indonesia. The government implemented a large social distance to stop the spreading of the virus in order to prevent the death toll from increasing day by day. Indonesian citizens ranging from students and employees must do their activities from home and to avoid the virus, the World Health Organization (WHO) encourages people to frequently wash their hands, wear masks, and keep a 1 meter distance [1].

Therefore with all those restrictions due to Covid-19, it can cause several changes on an individual and one of them is psychological changes that usually people don't realise such as depression.

Depression is a disorder that sufferers are often not well aware of as well as those around them, quoting from Jaka Arya Pradana (2016) said depression is also known as a disorder that is unseen or invisible disease [2].

The Head of the Mental Health Service Installation at Banyumas Hospital, Dr Hilma Paramita said that this pandemic has changed all aspects of people's lives. Based on the data from the Association of Indonesian Mental Health Specialists revealed that 57.6 percent of patients who underwent self examination indicated symptoms of

depression. There are several factors that caused depression during this pandemic covid-19, such as restrictions on community activities, economic problems, uncertainty when the pandemic will end, anxiety about future conditions, and terrible news about covid-19 from the media [3].

A survey conducted by Association of Indonesian Mental Medicine Specialists (PDSKJI) showed that 63% of respondents experienced anxiety and 66% of respondents experienced depression due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Symptoms of depression include sleep disturbance, lack of confidence, fatigue, lack of energy, and loss of interest[4]. Thus, this paper will answer : How do we cope and overcome depression during this Covid-19 pandemic?

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method that was used in this paper is qualitative research which is literature review. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non- numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences [5]. The literature review was done using articles and journals that are related to depression in the middle of Covid-19 pandemic. We also

use information from the news to prove our theory regarding our scientific paper. This paper focuses on the strategy of how to cope and overcome depression in the middle of this Covid-19 pandemic.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Background

The global widespread social isolation aims to reduce the spreading of the virus but instead depression had increased dramatically since the lockdown. Surveys have been spread out to review the French population's mental health after 8 weeks of lockdown and the results are 90% of them undergo a depressive system and most of them are young adults aged 18 - 25. Compared to other populations, young adults are the most vulnerable in having depression because they are exposed to social media that contains a lot of terrible news and the fear of facing their future as a result of the pandemic [6].

Usually people who suffer from depression have the following traits, such as; unhappy face, like being alone, daydreaming most of the time, feeling so emotional, nervous, feeling useless, easily getting angry, and afraid of the future [14]. A prolonged depression decreases productivity and can result with consequences, such as suicide and murderer. Not only to the individuals who are suffering, but also to the people around them will receive the negative impact.

One of the cases is a 23 year old woman was found dead after jumping from the 3rd floor of her apartment building in Tambora Area, West Jakarta. Tambora Police Chief Officer claimed that she was depressed after finding out that her swab result is positive covid-19. The woman was found lying on the floor when her pulse was still there, then the victim was taken to the hospital in Kebon Jeruk and treated in the ICU. Few hours later at around 8 pm, the woman died [7].

The second case happened in a small village where a guy named Heri Irawan killed his wife with an axe while she was sleeping on the sofa. The subject was suspected for being depressed after 2 months of not working due to pandemic covid-19. According to the witness, mainly his brother, Heri was trying to commit suicide several times by cutting his own hand but was stopped by his family [13].

Although factors of depression during the COVID-19 period have been widely reported. There are still substantial research gaps that are being filled by this study besides the aforementioned fact that such studies were scarce during the initial weeks. Cognitive, behavioral, and psychosocial factors related to COVID-19 were all found to be potential determinants of depression [15-17].

3.2. Factors Affecting Depression

There are four main risk factors for depression due to Covid-19 pandemic (Thakur and Jain, 2020)[8]. Social distancing and isolation, economic recession, stress and trauma for health workers as well as stigma and discrimination is the four main risks factors. First, social distancing and isolation. According to Winurini [4], the fear of being affected by CoronaVirus causes emotional distress in people. The feeling of isolation due to the existence of various health protocols and regulations related to Covid-19 can also lead to people's decline in mental health leading to depression and suicide.

Second, the other risk factor that triggers depression is economic recession. According to Winurini [4], the Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a global economic crisis that may increase the risk of occupational and economic suicide. More people lose their opportunity to continue to work because drastic cuts of employees make them get no money to fulfill their living necessities and needs. Uncertainty, hopelessness, and worthlessness are the reasons that increase the suicide rate.

The third risk that affects depression is stress and trauma for health workers. According to Winurini [4], Health care providers have the highest mental health risk during the Covid-19 pandemic. The stress comes from fear of being exposed to Coronavirus, feelings of helplessness, and trauma from seeing Covid-19 patients who suffer and eventually die. These factors lead to the risk of suicide for health workers. A survey of 2,132 nurses from all over Indonesia by the Department of Mental Nursing, the University of Indonesia Faculty of Nursing, and the Research Division of the Indonesian Mental Health Nurses Association (IPKJI) in April-May 2020 showed that more than half of health workers experience anxiety and depression, and are even thinking about suicide (Kompas,2020)[9].

The last factor that affects depression in the midst of pandemic is stigma and discrimination. The stigma of being exposed Covid-19 can trigger suicides around the world. In Indonesia, health workers experience stigma and discrimination. The nurses (and their families) are excluded from the social environment, evicted, prohibited from taking public transportation, prohibited from getting married, and possibly divorce (Kompas, 2020)[9].

3.3. Strategy to Overcome Depression

As a result of all those risk factors that was explained above, lots of people are depressed and it leads to suicide. This is a very serious issue that must be overcome. As stated by Afifah (2020)[10], she said that facing difficult situations of disease outbreaks added to the lack of direct interaction with people around make people with depression and anxiety disorders vulnerable to depression. There are several ways to overcome depression, such as avoiding smartphone usage, arranging schedules with fun activities, keeping yourself busy, workout and exercise, playing old games, setting everything carefully and

practicing mindfulness when panic strikes[10].

Smartphones can be the source of depression with non-stop exposure to information about the coronavirus pandemic or the lives of other people. Intense exposure to information about the corona virus can interfere with mental health, sometimes even causing panic attacks. Set special features on smartphones so don't need to bother checking notifications back and forth[10].

Keeping oneself busy can also help to overcome depression. By making or arranging schedules with fun activities such as work out and playing games it can divert your attention and forget about depression. Routines can maintain a proper sleep cycle, as well as balance the intake of nutrients and energy expended. All three are important for emotion regulation. Starting the day early with an activity that has been wanted to be done for a long time can be a good beginning for the day[10].

The Covid-19 pandemic affects everyday life in many aspects, from personal life to financial matters. This condition makes people vulnerable to stress. Therapists recommend analyzing the main source of anxiety. For example, anxiety comes from financial problems. Try looking at savings, debt, then start making calculations to determine a workable solution[10].

If the panic comes, try practicing mindfulness. This practice helps to keep the mind from being swept away by the tide of anxiety. Try to start by exhaling deeply. Once your heart rate relaxes, pay attention to five things around. Say it out loud, write it down, or make a detailed mental description of the five things. Then, observe four things that are currently being felt in your body. For example, clothes, hair, or feet on the ground. Then again describe in detail. Then, listen to the three things you are hearing clearly. Back to describe in detail. Then, identify two things that were smelt, for example the smell of tea on the table or floor mop fragrance. Finally, reflect on one thing that can be appreciated right away. By practicing mindfulness practices, the effects of panic attacks can be minimized[10].

Government Efforts

Mental health problems due to the Covid-19 pandemic have the government's attention. At the end of April 2020, Presidential Staff Office (KSP) together with the Ministry of Communications and Informatics, Ministry of Women Empowerment and Children (KPPA), Ministry of Health, Acceleration Task Force Handling Covid-19, PT Telkom, Infomedia, and Psychological Association Indonesia (HIMPSI) launched psychological consulting assistance services mental or mental health. This is intended to help deal with potential pressure threats community psychology in the middle Covid-19 pandemic. In practice, society who need service psychology call the hotline 119 ext 8[11]. Caller later will be connected to volunteers from HIMPSI and will get an opportunity for counseling for 30 minutes. There are three steps psychological treatment provided, namely public education, initial psychiatric consultation, and accompaniment.

As a preventive measure, the government through the

Ministry of Health has launched books Health Support Guidelines Mental and Psychosocial in a Pandemic Covid-19, referring to the policy WHO[12]. This book is a reference to the central government and government area in taking steps for prevention, treatment, and implementation of follow-up in the field of mental health and psychosocial in the Covid-19 pandemic. To make it optimal, the Ministry of Health is trying to involve the community through the Covid-19 Alert Village. Village Covid-19 alert is a village where the population is prepared with resources and capabilities to address health problems, both physically and mentally, independent in dealing with Covid-19. Here, clinical psychologists educate and provide skill guides practical to society in order to apply the principles of independent assistance. It appears that the steps that have been done by the government are comprehensive, involving cross-sector, the private sector, and the community, so it can be a good strategy appropriate in the prevention and alleviation of public health problems due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. CONCLUSION

Depression is a mental illness that is unseen but dangerous and even leads to death. Many factors cause depression and it makes a lot of people affected. Due to the pandemic's restrictions and regulations, people who suffer depression increased and suicide rates skyrocketed. There are several ways to overcome depression during Covid-19 pandemic that have been discussed above such as avoiding smartphones, keeping oneself busy, scheduling fun activities and practicing mindfulness. Government had also made efforts on this issue by providing psychological consulting assistance services and releasing Health Support Guidelines Mental and Psychosocial in a Pandemic Covid-19 guidebook. Being aware of depression is the first step towards overcoming it. Having a healthy lifestyle and managing stress can also help avoid depression. Seek out help and avoid exposure towards hoaxes that could trigger depression.

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