

The Importance of Early Childhood Mental Health as The Basis of Children's Development

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Abstract—Mental health have role as an important element in the individual health, this thing that has been in the spotlight in recent years. This had an impact on the community to understand the importance of well-being and mental health at every level of relations (individual, family, community). This article focuses on every aspect of early childhood mental health problems start from the importance of initial detection and the challenge of it, classification of early childhood mental health problems based on the DC: 0-3, the causes of early childhood, mental health problems, the impact of early childhood mental health problems and care, intervention and support systems for mental health problems early childhood.

Keywords—early childhood; mental health; stress; child development

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Hansen's research [1] that mental health serves as an important element in the health of individual, is the issue that has been in the spotlight for the last few years. This impact the community to better understand the importance of mental health and welfare on every relationships level (individual, family and community). The fact that the concept of mental health in babies, early childhood, and families are still unfamiliar, therefore, nowadays there are many movements which aims to develop and bring the concept to professional stage practices. Aside from that, this movement is also attempting multi-disciplinary approach to provide support in the mental health problems on the youngest members of the community (infants and early childhood).

In addition to Hansen there are Bayer that had research this issue 8 years ago [2] about international health policy, which begin to focus on the mental health problems of children because he said that the early mental health problems occurred on the youngest development phase and continue to grow to adolescence stage until adulthood stage if it is not dealt with as early as possible. These early age mental health problems will not only affect the children but also their families including their peers. The effects can be in the form of learning difficulties, dropped out of school, drugs abuse at latter age, domestic abuse and suicidal.

Odar [3] stated that one of the main focus in the field of mental health in children that is highlighted by the experts is the need for prevention and early intervention. Psychologist favored a significant contribution in this issue. If we see it closely, the lack of early intervention or early prevention service is the risk of the individual which is also a concern for professionals.

Base on some results of the earlier research which present the fact about the situation and current public awareness about mental health for children, author felt it is important to review more information in the topic of mental health in children. This is intended to provide more information and clearer information about mental health in children especially those at the early childhood because mental health is considered to be the core or the foundation for children to grow and develop further on their development stages.

II. DISCUSSION

A. The Importance of Early Detection and Who are Responsible To Do it

The determination of the risk signs and early symptoms of the disorder that appears at the onset is very important to heighten the accuracy of initial detection in order to identify the target and the point in time that is ideal for prevention and intervention to take place. This is also very important to be done as a diagnostic mean and the identification of the early behavioral patterns for a more specific disorder [4].

Mental health condition that is not good enough and development of the nervous system that is less than perfect, usually appear since the early stage but only recognized when the children are in school age. This issue if left unattended for too long will become chronic and can cause long-term derivation. Early identification which is done before the child enters school age might be able to prevent academic failure, behavior disruption, delinquency and also other mental health problem which will be brought up until their adulthood stage [4].

Mental Health in early childhood is established from the cooperation between several disciplines including psychology, nurses, social worker, therapist, early childhood education and contribution from various medical experts including

psychiatrist, doctors and family practice. Factors which are known as the most important contributor to mental health in babies, toddlers, or children in early childhood stage are as follow : interaction between children development, children nurturer, family structure and function, family situation and influences from the environment and also a different biological state [5].

B. The challenges faced in the effort to conduct initial detection

One of the most concerning ethics challenges is the uncertainty of the test results and the risk of a misdiagnose at the very young age. These due to the earlier of life is marked by the rapid changes in development and its variety in behavior that are significant through times make screening and early diagnosis more challenging [4].

Another thing that become the ethical challenge in making initial detection is the uncertainty of the test results. These gives uncertainties to the parents and caused the results to be no better and maybe worse in terms of their children's developments. Whether the children are okay or having the disorder that can be intervened at the early stage cannot be confirmed because of the ineffectiveness of the diagnosis [4].

The lack of accuracy in initial identification in children can caused a number of negative effects. The inaccuracy of the initial identification can cause anxiety that is unreasonable for the parents. Beside that, the inaccurate identification can also caused faulty recommendations such as unnecessary treatment that may cost a fortune and potentially invasive (e.g., giving medication that is not recurred) [4].

Never the less with or without negative effects of conducting initial detection, it is still necessary to be done because in some research, they have found the long-terms effects of mental health problems that arouse due to lack of intervention conducted as early as possible [6].

C. The Structure of The Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood 0-3

In line with DSM, The Diagnostic Classification of Mental Health and Developmental Disorders of Infancy and Early Childhood : 0-3 (DC:0-3) is a multi-axial classification system. On Axis I disturbance DC:0-3, including an alternative version of DSM IV diagnosis several things, such as: anxiety and major depressive disorder, new category diagnostic e.g. regulatory disorder and disruption of the relationship between elders and the children, there are also new disorders such as mixed emotional expressiveness disorder. The Axis II is used to assess personality disorders such as stated in DSM that the fundamental importance is the relationship between parents and their babies in understanding mental health early in childhood stage [5]. Axis V shows the level of functional emotion development in children compare to the general assessment of the overall function in DSM. This change shows the importance of social and emotional capacity

in the assessment of mental health in children. In the DC:0-3 manual also includes clinical assessment approach and broad classification guide for the practice of early childhood mental health [5].

Even though it is named DC:0-3, this manual guide has been adopted widely in the assessment and clinical services for children from newborn until the age of five. The used of DC:0-3 in all clinical multidisciplinary and throughout the world shows that the DC:0-3, the pioneer classification which attracted many attention to a number of symptom of mental health problems in early childhood stage, is successful [5].

Classification of DC: 0-3 as shown in table 1[5]

TABLE I

Axis	DC:0-3
I	Primary diagnosis
II	Relationship Disorder Classification
III	Medical and developmental disorder and condition
IV	Psychosocial stressor
V	Fuctional, emotional developmental level

Classification diagnostic DC:0-3

D. The cause of mental health problem in early childhood

Brenerand Fox in Bayer [2] stated that mothers who are stressed and rough disciplinary system by the parents are consistent predictor and cumulative from externalization of mental health problems during the first three-years of life. Beside that, the other causes of mental health problem in children which is presented by Klein and colleagues [7] is the chronic omission of affection by the parents, poverty, family history with mental health problem and others. The children who are abandoned by their parents have a high risk of mental health problem, whether it is behavioral problem, emotional, or academic problems. This could lead to developmental problems of the brain cells that can cause social and language discrepancy in children [7]. Also some mental health problems are usually arise from ugly past experience such as abandonment, violence, and parents divorce. [8].

Research in Australia stated that the high level of move house in children from birth until the age of two to five years old is also known to be the cause of mental health problems in children. The problems that often arise because of the high level of move house are behavioral problem, anxiety, and aggression [9]. Research in Australia has been reinforced by the recent research in Northern Ireland , mental health problems which often occurred from the high level of move house is the emotional stress that will lead to social relation and family disruption [10].

E. The impact of mental health problems in children at early childhood stage

There are several negative impact of mental health problem in children. The negative impact of the ugly past experience is mental health problems, not only in childhood state but also continue until the early adulthood. Mental health problem which usually arise and stay until early adulthood are depression, anxiety and mood disorder. Aside from that

children with mental health problem in their early adulthood reluctant to be addicted to drugs and cigarettes. This will also affect future physical health in their adulthood such as a weak immune system, liver disease, heart attract and lungs problems [8].

F. Treatment, prevention and intervention services of mental health problems in early childhood

According to Mendez and colleagues in Hansen [1] there are three stages of comprehensive mental health service system for children:

- 1) Development, at this stage early childhood treatment care takers have an important role such as, professional educators and similar professions. Their role is as the primary care takers who work to improve the children's health
- 2) Prevention, nurse family partnership home visitors, early head start home visitor, and other professionals who support families are professionals who have an important role at this stage.
- 3) Intervention, social workers, licensed mental health professional and intervention specialist who help families to observe in order to identify the children's needs have an important role at this age (Hansen, 2016, p.26).

Cuellar [11] stated that the prevention and treatment of mental health problems in early childhood must be in accordance with the problems. For example drugs and cognitive behavioral therapy can be given to deal with depression. For Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) handling, it can be focused on training the parents about how to manage and to solve issues with the behavior of the children. As one of the programs from The British National Institute for Health and Care Excellence, they hold group training for parents who have children suffering from ADHD. While the intervention or prevention is done through various ways such as academic intervention. Prevention encompasses both primary prevention or prevention of mental health problem before the onset. There is also a secondary prevention that minimizes or corrects the problem that has occurred. Prevention for early childhood mental health problem can be done by prevention programs that reach out to families that are experiencing a high level of stress because this kind of stress may increase their young children's risk of mental health problems. These programs' goals are to prevent the development of early childhood mental health problem by providing needed information. Some example programs for early childhood mental health's prevention are home visiting for families with young children from nurse family partnership home visitors, mental health consultation for child care programs, or self-help support groups for parents who are concerned they could abuse or neglect their infant or toddler [12]. Another thing that must

give attention in prevention of early childhood mental health's prevention are environmental factors and the interaction between the two that can cause several childhood disorders, as some of these are preventable. Prevention also can be done during the pregnancy such as early identification of phenylketonuria would prevent mental retardation [13].

I. CONCLUSION

Mental health problems in early childhood is very important to be dealt with, due to delays in the treatment of these problems will have a negative impact and possibly for the long term. Therefore early detection and parent's awareness and knowledge about this issue is very important. If the children are already suffering from these mental health problems, parents should immediately seek for help from experts in this field to do the right treatment. This is also true if the children show early symptoms of a mental health problem, parents should immediately request assistance from intervention experts so that the problems stop. To prevent mental health problems in children it is also needed parents who are liberated from mental health problems themselves. From the discussion above, we can conclude that mental health in children has an important role in the children's development or can be said that mental health in children is a solid foundation to the initial development for children to live better lives in the future.

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