

Family Experience in Maintaining the Health of Elderly During The Covid-19 Pandemic in Samarinda

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Abstract

The elderly are an age group that is vulnerable to various emergency conditions. In this Covid-19 pandemic, there are many suggestions to protect the elderly from the dangers of Covid-19 by keeping their distance, not visiting the elderly after traveling from areas infected with Covid-19, and the advice not to return home is interpreted as a form of concern for the elderly. So as not to contaminate and become disease carriers for the elderly at home. The family's experience in helping to maintain the health of the elderly requires more attention and time to meet their daily needs at home, so it is not uncommon for families to fight with the elderly because of misunderstandings. A significant family burden in caring for the health of the elderly will have an impact on reducing their participation and affect the health condition of the elderly.

The study objectives are; (1) to analyze the description of family experiences in caring for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic, (2) to explore the challenges of families in maintaining the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic, the feelings and meanings of families caring for the health of the elderly and family expectations in caring for elderly health during the covid-19 pandemic. This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. The population in this study were families who had elderly family members during the Covid-19 pandemic in Samarinda. This research activity was carried out in February 2021. The results showed that (1) the family made efforts to implement health protocols; (2) the family uses traditional medicine; (3) the family experiences feelings of discomfort; (4) families interpret their experiences positively, and (5) community participation in carrying out government recommendations.

Keywords: Family Experience, Maintaining for the Elderly, Pandemic Covid 19.

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I. Introduction

The spread of Covid-19 cases in Indonesia is relatively fast and has even spread between countries. Easy transmission is one of the reasons this virus continues to spread very quickly. 414,179 were confirmed, with 18,440 deaths (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2020).

WHO states that the coronavirus can infect everyone regardless of age group, including the elderly group. WHO added that people aged 60 years and over are an age group that is very vulnerable to exposure to viruses and many attacks of the respiratory tract. In addition, the elderly risk experiencing a more severe condition when attacked by Covid-19. Around 95% of European deaths occur among the elderly (PPK, 2020).

The elderly are the age group most at risk of various emergency conditions, such as disease outbreaks, because age is the dominant factor that makes the elderly vulnerable. In this Covid-19 pandemic situation, there are many suggestions to protect the elderly from the dangers of Covid-19 by keeping their distance, not traveling to areas infected with Covid-19, not visiting the elderly after traveling from areas contaminated with Covid-19, as a form of concern for the elderly, so they do not infect and become carriers of the disease for the elderly at home (Sohrabi et al., 2020).

Throughout the world, the number of older adults continues to increase; in Indonesia, the percentage of older adults reaches 9.60 percent, while when viewed from the pattern of residence of the elderly in Indonesia, the majority of older adults live with three generations, 40.64 percent, with family 27.30 percent and with partners. 20.30 percent (Central Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019). This data shows the importance of family attention in maintaining the health of the elderly who live with them to survive during this pandemic and prevent the elderly from being exposed to Covid-19.

Efforts made by families so that the elderly are not exposed to Covid-19 are by observing health protocols, namely; (1) staying away from crowds or gatherings that will put the virus at risk, (2) family members and relatives who are active outside the home and are at risk of being exposed to Covid-19 are asked not to approach the elderly, (3) the elderly are only allowed to be assisted by 1 or 2 members families who

comply with health protocols, such as washing hands, clean conditions and wearing masks (RI Ministry of Health, 2020).

The family's experience in helping to maintain the health of the elderly requires more attention and time to meet their daily needs at home, so it is not uncommon for families to fight with the elderly because of misunderstandings. The fatigue of family members who help the elderly will give a negative response during elderly care. Maryam et al. (2012) stated that multidimensional reactions to physical, psychological, social, and financial stressors are closely associated with family experiences in caring for clients. These experiences are related to physical problems such as fatigue and sleep disturbances, psychological issues such as pessimism, anxiety, and even depression, and social situations due to limited relations with society and also the economy.

Complex problems can exacerbate the condition of the elderly and make them unproductive for a long time, and they are very dependent on family or other people. The family burden caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is very complicated and stressful. They have to give more attention, help, and support the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic; besides that, at the same time, they feel afraid and worried about their health condition. The enormous family burden in caring for the health of the elderly will reduce their participation. Of course, this attitude contradicts the patient's recovery and causes many elderly patients to get sick eventually.

This study wants to get a detailed picture of the family's experience in caring for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their condition is facing the fact that by following the health protocol at home, the family takes extra care of the elderly and is limited in getting access to health services because it minimizes the elderly leaving the house, as well as the meaning of maintaining the health of the elderly according to the health protocol according to their perspective.

II. Method

This study used a phenomenological approach through in-depth interviews with participants to explore family experiences in caring for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Participants in the qualitative research were selected through a purposive sampling technique. In-depth interviews were conducted and stopped when the researcher reached data saturation. Five participants in this study had elderly family members.

III. Result And Discussion

A. Result of Study

1. Families Make Many Efforts to Implement Health Protocols for the Elderly

The challenge for families in caring for the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic is that families make various efforts to implement health protocols such as reminding them to use masks when traveling, advising them to stay at home, not traveling anywhere, washing hands and feet, bathing and washing hair after traveling. These results are presented in the following participant statements.

"...That's right, if you go anywhere, wear a mask, keep clean...(Participant 5)

"... we follow the recommendations on TV, and just stay at home..." (Participant2)

"... if you go out, you are reminded to wear a mask, when you come home, wash your hands and feet, then take a shower. If it's not so important, you don't have to go out..." (Participant 4)

2. Families use Traditional Medicine to Maintain the Health of Sick Elderly People.

Another family's experience caring for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic was making herbal medicines, scraping them, compressing them, and buying drugs. These results are found in the following participant statements below:

"...if parents have sciatica, I give herbal medicine..." (Participant 3)

"...if you suddenly have a stomach ache, scrape it off..... (Participant 4)

"..when you have aches and pains, I give you traditional medicines or herbal medicines, ma'am, compresses, usually don't boil betel leaves, lemongrass and bay leaves, warm water and salt..." (Participant 5)

3. The Family Experiences a Feeling of Discomfort

Some of the families experienced uncomfortable feelings when looking after the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as feeling sad, feeling disappointed, feeling annoyed, feeling afraid, feeling worried. These findings can be found in the following participant statements.

"..father and mother are old,I'm afraid if something happens to them.."(Participant 1)

"...As long as Covid-19 is guarding, afraid, sad, disappointed, how can a pandemic covid-19 like this happen...(Participant 2)

"...sometimes when parents are reminded but don't obey, it's annoying when stubborn parents take medicine.." (Participant 5)

4. Families Interpret their Experiences Positively

Several families expressed their positive experiences in caring for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic as a warning from God to be more careful, accept sincerely, practice patience, and be even more protective. These findings can be seen in the following participant statements:

"...This experience serves as a warning to be more careful and believe in God..." (Participant 4)

"...I became more protective..." (Participant 3)

"...I accept wholeheartedly... (Participant 5)

5. Community Participation in Carrying out Government Recommendations

Some expectations of the family to the community:

"... I hope that people should be more careful in maintaining their health..." (Participant 5)

"...I hope the community will stay healthy...and it's even better if you just stay at home and don't go anywhere..." (Participant 1)

"...Hopefully, my friends will follow the government's recommendations and recover soon..." (Participant 2)

"...Hopefully, we are all healthy and always adhere to health protocols..." (Participant 3)

IV. Discussion

The current study found that families caring for the elderly during the Covid 19 pandemic have complex experiences. The findings show that families face many challenges, such as struggling to implement health protocols and seeking good health for the elderly while sick. This finding is in line with the statement of Klanidhi, et al. (2021) that prevention must be the most crucial strategy for the elderly, namely following social distancing and keeping a distance of one meter from other people even though they are in good health. Avoid social gatherings and social activities but have frequent telephone communications to avoid loneliness. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer and use lots of masks. Always clean the bent elbow or use disposable tissue paper. Clean and disinfect surfaces that are operated on or touched repeatedly. The elderly must be supported and motivated to take medication regularly, and underlying diseases must be controlled. Participants in this study have carried out the implementation of health protocols. The second participant revealed that he followed the advice on television to stay at home, similar to the fourth and fifth participants, who showed that when they left the house, they were constantly reminded to wear a mask, come home from traveling to wash their hands and feet and then take a shower, if it's not so important don't leave the house.

In maintaining the health of the elderly, families use traditional medicine as initial treatment if the illness is mild, such as aching rheumatic pain, stomach ache, etc. People use plants as a traditional medicine to strengthen their body stamina, prevent disease or cure disease. Medicinal plants processed by boiling have been widely used for treatment because the benefits are felt, are easy to obtain, and have mild side effects. Several medicinal plant types are used: turmeric, temulawak, kencur, ginger, galangal, betel leaf, and cinnamon. In line with this research, information was obtained from the fifth participant, which revealed that the family gave traditional or herbal medicines by boiling betel leaves, lemongrass, bay leaves, warm water and salt to comfort the elderly who experience aches.

This study also found that families who cared for the elderly experienced feelings and meaning in expressing their experiences caring for the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic. There is a feeling of discomfort felt by the family while caring for the health of the elderly. Families feel sad, annoyed, afraid, and worried about the condition of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are concerned that their family members will experience Covid-19 disease. In addition, the family feels disappointed if the elderly do not

comply with medication according to the doctor's recommendations. This finding is in line with a study conducted by Jancovic et al. (2011), which identified that family experiences of caring for sick family members included: conflicting emotions, such as feelings of worry and guilt, feeling frustrated because it was too late to get help, having difficulty getting help from health services and care burden, the burden increases when health services transfer the responsibility of caring for sick people to families.

Families interpret positively the experience of caring for the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic to accept it sincerely, practice patience, and as a warning from God to be more protective in maintaining the health of the elderly. The results of this study identify the meaning of sincerity while caring for the elderly at home during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is in line with the results of research conducted by Luthfa (2018) that the length of time caring for family results in different experiences among families, so they can adapt positively to live patiently and accept existing conditions and always try to care for the elderly, during the Covid-19 pandemic at home.

The hope that families who care for the elderly want for the community is to be more careful in maintaining their health, not to go anywhere, to follow government recommendations, and hope that everyone will be healthy and recover soon. Hope is interpreted as something good, namely the hope of health and healing (Maran, 2021). The importance of community participation in helping protect elderly relatives and neighbors by complying with government recommendations to implement health protocols wherever and whenever is the hope of families caring for the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hakim, 2020). Public compliance with health protocols can improve Covid-19 prevention behavior so that new cases do not increase. Health protocols must be consistently implemented, starting from wearing masks, keeping a safe distance, washing hands, not making physical contact, and increasing endurance through nutrition and exercise (Afrianti&Rahmiati, 2021)

V. Conclusions And Recommendations

A. Conclusion

This study found five themes: families making efforts to implement health protocols, families using traditional medicine, families experiencing discomfort, families making positive meanings of their experiences, and community participation in carrying out government recommendations.

B. Suggestion

1. Healthcare workers should provide extra support for families who care for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic to improve the health quality of elderly family members.
2. Educational institutions should provide an understanding of the processes faced by families in caring for the health of the elderly during the Covid-19 pandemic at home and become additional knowledge and practice in the teaching and learning process.

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