

Challenges of integration of Traditional Health Services in Primary Health Care in North Minahasa regency

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Abstract: *Traditional health services are an integral part of the healthcare system, but they have not developed as significantly as other healthcare services. This research aims to investigate the challenges faced in integrating traditional health services into primary healthcare in North Minahasa Regency. The research method used is a case study, employing in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders involved in traditional health policy and practices. The study seeks to identify potential strategies to address these challenges, including enhancing dialogue and collaboration between both health systems and developing clearer and more inclusive regulations. Based on the interview findings, traditional health services in North Minahasa Regency face significant challenges in terms of legal recognition, a lack of trained personnel, and limited budgetary and regulatory support. Nonetheless, there are substantial opportunities for development, particularly in utilizing medicinal plants and providing skills training, such as acupressure, for the community. Further government support in terms of regulation and funding is necessary to overcome these challenges and promote the broader development of traditional health services..*

Keywords : *traditional health, healthcare services, Primary healthcare, North Minahasa Regency*

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INTRODUCTION

Utilization of traditional health services is still quite high in various parts of the world. The increase in the use of Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM) recorded East Asia is the highest user (Peltzer, 2016). In addition, in many countries that report that the increase in the use of traditional medicine occurs significantly as in the United States, 42%, Australia 48% France 49%, Canada 70%, and developing countries such as China 40%, Chile, 71%, Colombia 40%, up to 80% in African countries (Seetharaman, 2021).

The World Health Organization (WHO) emphasizes the need to know the prevalence and determinants of the use of Traditional complementary and alternative medicine (TCM) as well as conduct a comprehensive analysis of traditional medicine around the world to develop the WHO traditional medicine strategy 2014-2023, which aims to support countries- countries that harness the potential contributions of Traditional Medicine to health, wellness and patient-centered health care and promote the



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safe and effective use of traditional medicine by regulating, researching and integrating traditional medicine products, practitioners, and practices into health systems (World Health Organization, 2013).

In Indonesia traditional medicine has been known for a long time and is used by the community down and down and even become one of the people's choices when facing health problems both urban and rural communities. This traditional health service is one of the great potentials because it is close to the culture of the Indonesian people, easy to obtain, and relatively cheaper than conventional health efforts. Therefore, the development of traditional health services for the national level is actually quite large and has become a national strategy in improving health as stated in Law Number 17 of 2023 concerning health. However, the development of traditional medicine at the national level still has obstacles to government policies and traditional medicine products that are forced to enter the paradigm of conventional medicine so that it is difficult to get recognition from the conventional medical profession. Therefore, traditional medicine should be embraced by providing strict limits on products, as well as traditional medicine practices so that the development of traditional medicine can be recognized from the conventional medical profession. Traditional medicine has gained recognition and the government nationally has made official institutions such as in America, China, India, Vietnam, and Japan (Seetharaman, 2021).

In addition to obstacles in the development of traditional medicine products, Riskesdas (2018) data also states that the proposal for the utilization of traditional health services in Indonesia is still not evenly distributed in each province, as seen from the data stating that South Kalimantan province (54.1%) is the province with the most utilization of traditional health services. However, inversely proportional to the province of West Sulawesi became the province that uses the least traditional health services (8.5%). Traditional health services are indeed an integral part of primary health services as expected in the health sector's Medium Term Plan 2020-2024. However, this is of course related to various obstacles encountered at the implementation level, especially in puskesmas as a government-owned primary health service. Therefore, this research is very important to know in depth how the challenges of the integration process of traditional health services in primary health care.

METODOLOGI

This study used a qualitative research design conducted in September 2024 at the Tatelu Health Center and Talawaan Health Center, North Minahasa regency. Informants in this study are in charge of traditional health care programs in both health centers. The research Data was obtained through in-depth interviews with informants, which provided insight into the implementation and challenges in the integration of traditional health services at the primary health service level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on found several challenges and opportunities related to the integration of traditional health services in the primary health care system in North Minahasa regency. This interview provides a clear picture of the obstacles faced and the potential that exists in the development of this service.

First, traditional health services cannot yet be claimed through BPJS, which makes implementation difficult because health workers have to use their own resources and provide services for free.

"For the material, khan bought it himself, so we only train it, so that people can be independent."

"Because khan acupuncture is our skill here khan all unpaid, free khan... only until now can not be claimed in BPJS."

One of the main challenges is that traditional health services have not been included in the BPJS claim scheme. This creates a financial burden for health workers who have to provide themselves with materials and tools for treatment. As a result, services such as acupuncture should be provided free of charge, relying



on resources on the part of health workers, rather than from government support. The comments of the interviewees indicate that the independence of patients in using traditional services is indeed the main goal. However, the inability to access funding through BPJS is a major barrier to the sustainability of this service. Second, the legality constraints of traditional health products. Traditional medicine based on medicinal plants is already quite widespread in the region, especially through independent care programs fostered by Health Centers. In fact, the use of traditional medicine in Indonesia is very common, up to 89% of households use traditional medicine¹⁹. However, the challenge of legality remains a major obstacle, especially in obtaining permits for traditional products such as essential oils, which despite being widely used by the public, are difficult to legalize.

"Like this essential oil, so many people use it, but torang mo makes a permit, it is very difficult, even though it can increase citizenship income."

This problem illustrates how products that have empirical benefits still face bureaucratic barriers that slow their development, when empirical data can be valuable intellectual property. In addition, the lack of formal institutions or associations in the field of traditional medicine makes the legalization process even more difficult. Another challenge is the weak standardization process of traditional medicine. Third, the limitations of trained personnel and lack of budget support. In both health centers, the limited number of trained personnel is one of the main problems. At the Talawaan and Tatelu Health Centers there is only one trained personnel who can provide acupressure and medicinal plant services. In addition, the budgets of local and district governments are very limited, so many needs related to tools and materials must be handled independently by health workers.

"I and Evert were acupressure, if Soleman Ngangi, Tatelu Health Center, continue to move to regional hospitals."

"Initially there were, but the obstacles, first the energy, and so far not maso BPJS, whereas torang can develop."

The World Health Organization (WHO) advocates that the integration of traditional medicine into national health strategies can increase funding and collaboration between conventional and traditional practitioners.

CONCLUSIONS

The integration of traditional health services in the primary health care system in North Minahasa regency still faces a number of challenges. Some of them are the absence of financing schemes through BPJS, traditional health product legality constraints, limited trained personnel, and lack of budget support from the government. Nevertheless, traditional health services such as acupressure and the use of medicinal plants are already widespread in the community through Puskesmas programs. The great potential of this traditional medicine can be seen from the benefits felt directly by the community, although there are still bureaucratic obstacles that slow down its development. The suggestion is that the government should consider incorporating traditional medicine, such as acupressure, into the BPJS scheme to ease the burden on health workers and expand public access to these services. In addition, simplification of the process of legalization of traditional health products, such as essential oils, is needed so that the potential of the local economy can be maximized. Efforts to increase training for health workers in the field of traditional medicine must also be strengthened to ensure the sustainability of services in Puskesmas. Collaboration between the conventional and traditional health sectors needs to be encouraged so that the integration of traditional medicine is more optimal, while the establishment of formal associations and standardization of services will accelerate the legalization process and increase public confidence in these services.



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