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Health Education About the Importance of Antenatal Care During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Antenatal care is very important for pregnant women; mothers who do not do prenatal care have a higher risk of pregnancy complications and maternal death. The benefits of pregnancy tests are to detect complications such as preeclampsia, diabetes mellitus, gestational age, fetal growth, and maternal and fetal health. The purpose of this health education is to make participants aware of the importance of Antenatal care visits during pregnancy during the COVID-19 pandemic. This community service was carried out in October 2021 at BPM Suratmi, Batam City. Participants who were included in this activity were pregnant women who were willing to attend when the activity took place, as many as 14 participants. This form of community service activity is in the form of providing health education to pregnant women, with material on understanding Antenatal care, Antenatal care goals benefits of Antenatal care, Antenatal care examination standards, and the impact of not having Antenatal care visits. Counseling is presented with media in the form of laptops, infocus, power points, and brochures given to mothers. After completing the counseling activities, a pregnancy examination was carried out in accordance with the standard of examination, it was found that the results of the examination were good for the mother and fetus of all respondents. From the evaluation results, it was found that the respondents understood and understood the importance of antenatal care visits during the COVID-19 pandemic and the respondents were enthusiastic about the material presented, as seen from the questions given by the participants. It is hoped that mothers can carry out pregnancy checks according to the schedule of examinations to midwives or other health facilities regarding the state of physical and psychological health during pregnancy so that they can detect the development and health of the mother and fetus while still implementing strict health protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Introduction

Antenatal care is very important for pregnant women. Mothers who do not do prenatal care have a higher risk of pregnancy complications and maternal death. The benefits of prenatal care are to detect complications such as preeclampsia, diabetes mellitus, gestational age, fetal growth, and maternal and fetal health.¹

Health education is usually carried out through health promotion as an effort to increase the ability and knowledge of the community in the individual

learning process by, for, and with the community groups in order to increase knowledge that affects behavior change.²

During pregnancy check-ups during the COVID-19 outbreak, this can be done by implementing strict health protocols, such as wearing masks, washing hands with soap and running water, and keeping a distance when in health facilities or in public places.³

COVID-19 infections have spread since 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that this virus was first discovered in Wuhan Province, China.⁴

In a pandemic situation, many restrictions are placed on most services, including maternal and child health services. That's why pregnant women are reluctant to go to health facilities for fear of being infected by the virus. Presidential Decree No. 12 2020 stipulates that the Covid-19 virus is a national non-natural disaster that has an impact on increasing the number of victims exposed to the virus.³

A number of countries carry out prevention and control of viral infections, especially in vulnerable groups who have a greater potential risk, such as groups of pregnant women.⁴ Standard pregnancy check-ups are an obstacle for mothers and health workers due to the Covid-19 outbreak due to restrictions on maternal and child health services.⁵

Currently, Indonesia is implementing the adaptation of new habits. With the implementation of this adaptation, it is hoped that the rights of public health services can be fulfilled.³ In 2019, the coverage of health services for K-4 pregnant women in Indonesia has increased, compared to the target of the Ministry of Health's 2019 Strategic Plan of 76%, but in 2020 it decreased due to this pandemic to 61%, and there are still several provinces that do not reach on that target.³

Pregnant women are one of the vulnerable groups who are at risk of being exposed to the Covid-19 virus caused by physiological changes that result in decreased immunity during pregnancy which has a serious impact on the health of pregnant women.⁶

Screening of pregnant women in preparation for labor is important to be carried out intensely. This is based on the findings of a study in New York. Of 215 mothers who gave birth that 15.3% were found to be positive for Covid. Most of the positive cases were in mothers who gave birth, as many as 88% without symptoms.⁷

All pregnant women who are about to give birth are required to perform an RT-PCR examination to establish a definite diagnosis. This is in line with the latest recommendation from the RCOG, which recommends that all hospitalized patients should undergo an RT-PCR test. However, if health facilities

have limitations to doing this, screening can be done first using other methods.⁷

Health services have guidelines that have been set by the government. The current pandemic conditions cause changes in terms of health services. Antenatal care services can be done by means of house-to-house visits or online as a substitute for classes for pregnant women.⁸ One of the actions and support that can be taken by midwives is by providing health education as an effort to improve the ability of the community in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and health behavior.

This study aims to describe health education counseling about the importance of antenatal care visits during the pandemic.

2. Methods

This community service will be held in October 2021 at BPM Suratmi, Batam City, at 09.00 WIB. Participants who took part in this activity were pregnant women who were present during the activity, namely 14 people. The form of this community service activity is in the form of counseling on the provision of health education to pregnant women, with material on the meaning of antenatal care (ANC), the purpose of ANC, the benefits of ANC, ANC examination standards, and the impact of not having an ANC visit. After completing the counseling activity, a pregnancy examination was carried out according to the standard antenatal care examination for all respondents.

The preparatory stage carried out before the activity was compiling an activity schedule, making materials on the meaning of ANC, the objectives of ANC, the benefits of ANC, ANC inspection standards, the impact of not visiting ANC, preparing laptop media, infocus, brochures, and preparing facilities and infrastructure to support activities. Counseling with strict health protocols.

3. Results and Discussion

Health education counseling is conducted with the topic of the importance of ANC visits for pregnant women by explaining the topic of counseling, followed by a question and answer session. Counseling is

presented with media in the form of laptops, infocus, power points, and brochures given to pregnant women with the aim that the health education materials can be well understood by respondents.

The purpose of this activity is to increase the knowledge of pregnant women. Extension techniques with presentations that are easy to understand by mothers, demonstrations, discussions, and evaluations. The media used is one of the most important things in carrying out activities.⁹

There are many factors that affect the knowledge of pregnant women, such as age, experience, and education. One of the dominant factors in determining a person's actions and behavior is knowledge. At a time like this, mothers' knowledge must be increased regarding pregnancy during a pandemic in order to avoid infection with the COVID-19 virus because pregnant women are more susceptible to the virus.¹⁰

The counseling activity started at 09.00 WIB, the event lasted for 90 minutes, starting with self-introductions and participants, then making presentations and discussions, and finally continued with evaluation. The evaluation session was given in the form of a question and answer session containing questions from the presenters, with the aim of raising the motivation of the mothers, and finally giving prizes to respondents who succeeded in answering questions from the presenters. After completing the counseling activities, a pregnancy examination is carried out in accordance with standard examinations, including:

Physical examination

Physical examination is carried out to determine the health condition of the mother and fetus, monitor the progress of pregnancy, ensure maternal health and fetal growth and development, ensure complications that can occur during pregnancy, ensure full-term delivery, preparation for exclusive breastfeeding, and mentally prepare for a new role as parents. With the physical examination, the mother feels calmer because she already knows the condition of the mother and fetus.

Distribution of brochures

Brochures are tools in the form of small paper containing information using easy-to-understand language accompanied by pictures according to the material. The brochure contains information on nutrition during pregnancy, the dangers of pregnancy, high-risk pregnancy, the benefits and purposes of prenatal care, and the dangers if the mother does not check her pregnancy according to the standard examination schedule.

Midwives are the frontline health workers in maternal and neonatal health services, family planning, and health care during the new normal period.³ The role of midwives is the highest number of antenatal care workers in Indonesia, reaching (82.4%). Midwife Practice is the highest service place, with a percentage of 40.5%.¹¹

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the government appealed to the movement to wear masks in healthy or sick conditions, with this appeal resulted in restrictions for pregnant women to leave the house. Thus the fertility rate during the pandemic continues to increase, and the reason is that some couples of childbearing age are reluctant to access health facilities. Dr. Budi Wiweko POGI appealed to PUS to postpone the pregnancy program in order to minimize the impact of virus transmission on pregnant women and fetuses.¹²

Based on the results of the preliminary study, there are still many pregnant women who do not receive or do not carry out antenatal care services. There are many impacts that result because the pregnancy examination is not carried out. Complete pregnancy services (K1-K4) are important in order to know early whether the condition of the mother and fetus is in good condition or at risk.¹³

It is hoped that mothers can know how to calculate fetal movements independently. Pregnant women are advised to count fetal movements independently during this covid pandemic so that mothers can monitor and ensure fetal movements regularly.²

4. Conclusion

Health education for pregnant women during the pandemic is very much needed to prepare for a healthy and safe pregnancy and delivery for the mother and fetus. During this pandemic, mothers must continue to carry out pregnancy checks by observing strict health protocols, using masks and complete PPE, and maintaining distance. From the results of the evaluation, it was found that the respondents understood and understood the importance of pregnancy visits during the pandemic. It was seen that the mothers were enthusiastic about the activities that took place, and there was reciprocity between the mothers and the presenters. After completing the counseling activity, a pregnancy examination was carried out in accordance with the standard of examination. It was found that the results of the examination were good for the mother and fetus for all activity participants. The mother also hopes that there will be activities like this again.

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