

Tuberculosis and Family Physicians during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia In Progress

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Background: During the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), there has been a global reduction of Tuberculosis (TB) treatment of 21%, totalling more than 1.4 million TB patients missing out on services. The highest decrease of TB services was reported in Indonesia (down 42%), followed by the Philippines (37%) and India (25%). Today, Indonesia has the second-highest TB prevalence, following India. The reduction of TB and other communicable diseases, such as malaria and HIV, is critical for Sustainable Development Goals on health and well-being. The world's poorest people are at higher risk of developing TB. More than 1 million people live with TB in Indonesia, and TB contributed to more than 10 000 deaths per year. The COVID19 pandemic posed challenges to delivering services, contact-tracing, timely TB diagnoses, delivery information, education, and communication about TB to the affected communities, resulting in increased TB-MDR (Multiple Drugs Resistant) and mortalities.

Between April and July 2020, the Indonesian Association of Family Physicians (PDKI: Perhimpunan Dokter Keluarga Indonesia) and the Indonesian National Committee on Disaster Management (BNPB: Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana) launched a joint initiative to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the TB communities. More than 500 family physicians in Indonesia participated in this programme. Individual physicians formed WhatsApp groups to reach out to their service-communities in 20 out of 34 provinces in Indonesia. Hundreds of WhatsApp groups were created within four months, involving thousands of group memberships. Most of these WhatsApp outreach programmes are continuing today. To our knowledge, this innovative strategy is the first of its kind ever been conducted in Indonesia.

Research aim: This research aims to explore the family physicians' and communities' perceptions and application of their knowledge to improve TB services, contact-tracing, and educate communities on COVID-19 and TB in Indonesia.

Method: This is a pre and post intervention study to TB patients, using WhatsApp media, video call, and structured questionnaire.

Keywords: TB, Covid-19, Family Physicians