Mental Health Problems in Indonesian Children: A Review Study

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Abstract

Objective: This study aims to review scientific literature about Mental Health Problems (MHP) in Indonesian population, especially children and important findings of the studies.

Materials & methods: Two methods of searching were conducted; English peer-reviewed literature from Pub Med and MEDLINE and the keywords included Mental Health Problems, children, Indonesia. Specifically, mood disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety, phobia, insomnia, ADHD and OCD were also included. Several related studies published in Bahasa (Indonesian Language) were searched in Indonesian version of Google with “masalahkesehatanjiwa” and “anak” as the keywords.

Results & discussion: At least, there are eight studies conducted in Indonesia related to MHP in children both in national and international publications. The studies applied various instruments and revealed different results. The majority of the studies found that Indonesian children had risk for MHP, some factors such as academic competence, family relationship, and maternal parenting stress related to MHP, and some intervention-based researches reported to have effective result in this population, such as atypical antipsychotic in adolescents with schizophrenia, Stroop test in children with ADHD and Triple P-Positive Parenting Program in children with emotional and behavioral problems. More studies should be conducted to investigate factors related to MHP based on Indonesian population as well as interventions to minimize the impact of MHP in children in Indonesia.

ABBREVIATIONS

MHP: Mental Health Problems

INTRODUCTION

MHP in Indonesian children population is not a new phenomenal issue, but related clinical and epidemiological studies are rarely to be conducted in Indonesia. In fact, the prevalence gradually increases every year, although the numbers cannot be properly specified. Unfortunately, many reports revealed that Indonesian children may be affected by MHP in various forms, both as abusers and victims [1,2]. Some studies found that MHP in children expose them to early criminal behaviors such as smoking, drug use and pornography, and psychiatric diseases, such as bipolar disorder and suicide [3-5]. Unlike MHP in adults, MHP in children is more difficult to detect because their inner world has not well developed yet. Therefore, it is important to conduct early detection of MHP in Indonesian children, so the number of MHP in adults can be reduced and avoided, because MHP in children predicted MHP in adult [6].

Even the impacts of MHP in children seem to be serious, but the literature about MHP in children population in Indonesia is still limited. This paper purposed to review scientific literatures about MHP in Indonesian children population that were published nationally and internationally, including related factors as well as any intervention to minimize the impact of MHP in children.
School had emotional symptoms (37.8%) higher than any other MHP, such as peer problems, conduct problem, and hyperactivity. The study also found that three factors such as academic competence, family relationship, and maternal parenting stress related to MHP in school-aged children (r = -0.177, -0.176 and 0.173 p<0.05 respectively). Furthermore, age related to peer problems negatively (r = -0.162 p<0.05), and maternal parenting behavior had negative relationship with emotional symptoms (r = -0.287 p<0.05) and positive relationship to both conduct problems and hyperactivity (r = 0.162, 0.143, p<0.05 respectively). Maternal depression was also found to be related to emotional symptoms and hyperactivity (r = 0.236 and -0.158, p<0.05 respectively). The second study discussed that medication adherence of some children with schizophrenia is affected by parental relationship (24.4%). This study suggested parents to improve their relationship with schizophrenic children in order to increase medication adherence and avoid relapse [7,8].

In addition, the other three studies are intervention-based study. First study found that adolescents with schizophrenia who had atypical antipsychotic medication showed higher executive function. The adolescents were treated with rispiridone, aripiprazole, olanzapine and clozapine for one to 36 months. Compared to controlled group, the adolescents showed higher for BRIEF T score such as on emotional state, initiate scale, monitor scale, and behavior regulation index (detail in Table 1). The study suggested taking atypical antipsychotic medication for adolescents with schizophrenia in order to maintain and improve their executive function [9]. The second study revealed that age may influence the result of Stroop test in children with ADHD. Compared to young school-aged children (children aged 6-9 years old), older school-aged children (children aged 10-13 years old) showed significantly delayed completion time for the CST and IST compared with controls of the same age. This study suggested that Stroop test may differentiate ADHD in older school-aged children or preadolescent children [10]. The third study discussed that the Triple P-Positive Parenting Program Seminar Series was effective to help parents of children with behavioral problems. The study involved 143 parents of children aged 2-12 years. It was reported that intervention group had a greater decrease in child behavioral problems (d = 0.45), dysfunctional parenting practices (d = 0.69), parental stress (d = 0.44), and a greater increase in parenting confidence (d = 0.45). It is suggested that the program was effective to improve parenting skill and control

### Table 1: English and Bahasa published articles related to MHP in Indonesian children population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Searching engine (language)</th>
<th>Authors (years) &amp; research design</th>
<th>Samples &amp; Instruments</th>
<th>Important Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Pub Med (English)</td>
<td>Saputra, Yunibhandi &amp; Sukratul (2017).</td>
<td>SDQ.</td>
<td>37.8% children had emotional symptoms. Factors such as academic competence, family relationship and maternal parenting stress related to MHP in school-aged children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Pub Med (English)</td>
<td>Wiguna et al. (2015) A descriptive study</td>
<td>143 children aged 6-12 years old and their mothers.</td>
<td>75.6% parents of children with schizophrenia experienced a healthy parental relationship, a small number of Indonesian parents with schizophrenic children experienced an unhealthy parental relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Pub Med (English)</td>
<td>Wiguna et al. (2014) Cross cestional study with control group</td>
<td>Indonesian version BRIEF questionnaire.</td>
<td>Mean of age was 16.27 (standard deviation 1.86) year-old. Most of the case group (95%) has been treated with atypical antipsychotic such as risperidone, aripiprazole, olanzapine, and clozapine for one to 36 months. The prevalence risk ratio on several clinical scales were higher in children with antipsychotic-treated schizophrenia compared to control group, such as on emotional state (PRR= 7.43, 95% confidence interval [CI]=2.38-23.15), initiate scale (PRR=6.32, 95% CI=2.51-15.95), monitor scale (PRR=8.11, 95% CI=2.0-32.86), and behavior regulation index (PRR=4.09, 95% CI=1.05-15.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pub Med (English)</td>
<td>Thursina et al (2015) A quasi experiment study.</td>
<td>ACTRS, ACPRS, WISC III, MMMSEC</td>
<td>As for the error rates of the CST and IST, ADHD and control children at 6–9 years old showed no difference. However, error rates of CST and IST in the ADHD children at 10–13 years were significantly higher than those of control of the same age.</td>
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</table>
Central interesting findings of the studies revealed that some family appropriately, they will have higher risk for suicide [4]. The other depression. Later on, if the depressed children are not treated Children with emotional problems tend to have higher risk for emotional symptoms more than other problems. and hospital found the similar finding, that school-aged children in related studies is still limited. Two studies conducted at school interventions. The last study stated specific MHP clearly. This to investigate the type of MHP in order to specify appropriate studies is, no specific MHP is discuss because they only focus on initial screening of MHP, so other study was suggested to investigate the type of MHP in order to specify appropriate interventions. The last study stated specific MHP dearly. This hospital based study found that 42.2% of school-aged children have emotional symptoms and the other majority children (54.81%) exhibited peer problems [14]. The detailed information about reviewed studies as mentioned in Table (1).

### Behavioral Problems of Children

Both of English and bahasa publication studies revealed that children in Indonesia are suffering from MHP, but the number of related studies is still limited. Two studies conducted at school and hospital found the similar finding, that school-aged children in Indonesia have emotional symptoms more than other problems. Children with emotional problems tend to have higher risk for depression. Later on, if the depressed children are not treated appropriately, they will have higher risk for suicide [4]. The other interesting findings of the studies revealed that, some family factors should increase the risk of MHP in children, the factors such as family relationship, maternal parenting stress, maternal parenting behavior and maternal depression is important to note in order to minimize the risk for MHP in children. In addition, some intervention-based studies found different facts such as atypical antipsychotic medications are effective to maintain executive function of adolescents with schizophrenia, Stroop test is effective to separate ADHD in preadolescent children and Triple P intervention is a helpful program for parents of children with behavioral problems in Indonesia

### CONCLUSION

MHP have many consequences in later life of the children. Once when children become adults, undetected and untreated MHP increase the severity of MHP. Considering the serious impacts of MHP in children population in Indonesia, further researches are needed to fulfill the gap of knowledge of the related issue, because the study about MHP in Indonesian children population is still limited. The other researches are expected to focus more on interventions, especially family based intervention because some investigated factors of children with MHP related to...

### REFERENCES


