

Can AC Increase the Risk of COVID-19 Infection?

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UGM Infection Disease Epidemiologist, Prof. Dr. dr. Hari Kusnanto Josef said that until now, there had been no study said that air conditioner (AC) could increase the risk of Coronavirus spread or COVID-19. Even so, several studies reveal the Coronavirus can live in environments with cold and dry temperatures, while high temperatures and high humidity can reduce transmission of the Coronavirus.

"Theoretically, it might be possible, but until now, there has been no research related to the transmission of COVID-19 from the use of AC," he said on Thursday (9/4).

The Professor in the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing (FKKMK) UGM said that regarding the transmission through AC, research showed that indeed there is an influence of the use of AC in virus transmission, but so far, it is only conducted in SARS.

"So far, there is only SARS research that tells about AC transmission, but it rarely happens. It happened at that time at the Hongkong Metro Hotel," he said.



He said in Wuhan, there was a family who ate at the restaurant with AC, and they were known to be positive COVID-19. After tracing people who were also in the restaurant at the time, the authorized party suggested testing them all. After the results were released, they showed that there was no Coronavirus transmission. Both diners and restaurant staff were negative COVID-19.

Although there are no studies related to air conditioning and the spread of COVID-19, Hari said that a closed room with limited air circulation could increase the risk of spreading the virus. To minimize this, he advised people to open windows so that circulation and ventilation increased.

"In a closed room with minimal circulation, there is a great risk of spreading the virus, especially narrow spaces, and air conditioning continue to live. Therefore, efforts are made to open the windows so that there is air circulation so that there will be fresh air and a healthy atmosphere inside," Hari explained.

The lecturer at the Department of Family Medicine and Community Medicine said that the virus could not survive long in the air. The virus tends to live only for about 30 minutes in the air, unlike on the surface of objects that can last for days.

"So, using AC in the house is not a problem. No need to worry as long as there are no positive families or there is no contact with an infected person to COVID-19," he said.

According to him, the most important thing to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is to do physical distancing by staying at home, diligently washing hands with soap, and using masks if there are urgent needs only.

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