

Psychologists in the Community Health Center, Solutions for Mental Health in Indonesia


Wednesday, 14 September 2011 WIB, By: Marwati

The high prevalence of mental disorders that are not addressed by the availability of healthcare facilities reflects a quite alarming mental health problems in Indonesia. It is more worrisome when seeing the limited number of professions to address the issue, namely psychiatrists, mental health nurses and psychologists.

Compared with the population of Indonesia in 2011 that is about 241 million, the number of psychiatrists available is only about 600 people and the number of clinical psychologists are still about 365 people. "Mental health problems cause prolonged suffering for individuals, families, communities, and country as they relate to the independence and productivity of the sufferers," says Prof. Dr. Sofia Retnowati, M.S. in the Senate Hall on Monday (12/9), when confirmed as a Professor of UGM Faculty of Psychology.

According to Sofia Retnowati, the high prevalence of mental disorders that are not addressed by the adequate capacity of mental health services indicates the high treatment gap. One strategy to address these problems is to include mental health services into primary care, which in Indonesia is known as Community Health Centers (Puskesmas). "The availability of mental health services in primary care is due to the change of paradigm of community mental health services, because the old paradigm of mental disorders treatment is more focused on medical-biological approach, while the new paradigm emphasizes on a biopsychosocial approach," she explained.

Related to this issue, various elements of society and health professionals in Indonesia have positioned mental health services in primary care. One strategy used to optimize mental health services in the community health center is to put the psychologist in the community health centers. "This program has been initiated by Sleman District Government in collaboration with UGM Faculty of Psychology since 2004. The success of this program became a model for the Government of Yogyakarta city to further develop it until recently," she said.



In a speech *Psychologists at Community Health Center: Needs and Challenges for the Profession of Clinical Psychology in Indonesia*, the wife of Prof. Dr. M. Noor Rochman Hadjam, S.U., reveals the success of psychological services in primary care is largely determined by the good communication between psychologists with other health workers. Things that often become obstacles in the collaboration are the existence of "cultural differences" between the medical and psychological care.

To improve the ability to collaborate with the medical profession in primary care, psychologists are required to have a commitment to collaborate with the health team and able to adapt as well as to build a collaborative mindset in order to save time and effort in serving patients. In addition, the psychologists are required to adjust the process of assessment and intervention with the primary care needs and able to communicate both verbally and in writing effectively and efficiently. "The psychological reports have to be free from jargon, they should also foster good relations with the referral network," explained the mother of Muhammad Aulia Rahman, S.E, M.Ec.Dev., and dr. Muhammad Bherbudi Wicaksono.

The road to integrate psychologists in primary care is just the beginning. Of course, there are still many things to be considered together. However, as academician, Sofia Retnowati believes these small steps, if successfully developed, will have an impact on the country. "If this integration becomes a system that can be applied widely, with God's will, it will be the real work of psychologists to the people of Indonesia," she said to conclude her speech.

Related News

- [UGM Encourages Regional Government to Support Indonesia Free of Stocks Movement](#)
- [GMC Health Center](#)
- [Clinical Psychology Services at Public Health Center Still Minimum](#)
- [CPMH UGM Ready to Send Psychologists to Cebongan Prison](#)
- [CPMH UGM Organise Public Mental Health Weeks 2019](#)