



Analysis of Health Worker Behavior in Increasing Public Awareness of Immunization Through Interpersonal Communication Approach in the Work Area of UPT. Muara Teweh Health Center

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Abstract

Background: At UPT. Muara Teweh Health Center, complete basic immunization for infants aged 0-11 months in 2024 only reached 165 infants out of 528 neonatal data in 2024. Which means that only 31.25% received complete basic immunization, and far from the target. The lack of approach by health workers to the community is one of the factors in the low achievement value of the immunization program at UPT Muara Teweh Health Center. Objective: to analyze the behavior of health workers in implementing an interpersonal communication approach to increase public awareness of immunization in the work area of the Muara Teweh Health Center UPT. Method: The research design used was a qualitative method with a case study approach, with a sample of 4 people with a purposive sampling technique. Results: the description of the knowledge of health workers is quite adequate but the behavior in applying interpersonal communication in order to gain public trust in increasing the achievement of the Muara Teweh Health Center UPT immunization program. So that it can be input for the Health Center to improve interpersonal communication training, sustainable approaches, collaboration with related cross-sectors in order to improve the achievement of health programs, especially immunization.

Keywords

Health Worker Behavior, Complete Basic Immunization

Introduction

Immunization is one of the most effective public health interventions in preventing infectious diseases and reducing mortality, especially in children. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), immunization can prevent 2-3 million deaths annually (WHO, 2021). However, immunization coverage in various regions, including Indonesia, remains suboptimal. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health shows that in 2022, complete basic immunization coverage only reached around 84%, still below the national target of 93% (Kemenkes RI, 2022). This low immunization coverage is caused by various factors, including lack of public awareness, misinformation, and distrust of immunization programs.

One key factor in increasing public awareness of immunization is the role of healthcare

workers. Healthcare workers, especially those on the front lines such as doctors, nurses, and midwives, play a strategic role in providing education and building public trust in immunization. Effective interpersonal communication between healthcare workers and the public is believed to be the right approach to overcoming these barriers. Interpersonal communication allows healthcare workers to convey information personally, answer questions, and address public doubts and concerns regarding immunization (Paterson, P., et al, 2021) .

Several previous studies have shown that good interpersonal communication can increase public acceptance of health programs, including immunization. For example, a study by Waisbord et al. (2018) found that direct interactions between health workers and the public can increase understanding and trust in vaccination. Furthermore, research by Larson et al. (2018) highlighted the important role of health workers in countering misinformation and building public trust in immunization programs.

However, challenges remain in implementing interpersonal communication by healthcare workers. Several factors, such as high workloads, lack of communication training, and time constraints, can impact the effectiveness of such communication. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of healthcare workers' behavior in implementing an interpersonal communication approach to increase public awareness of immunization is needed (Ministry of Health, 2023).

Based on this background, researchers are interested in analyzing the behavior of healthcare workers in the Muara Teweh Community Health Center (UPT) working area in increasing public awareness of immunization through an interpersonal communication approach. By understanding the factors influencing healthcare worker behavior, it is hoped that more effective strategies can be formulated to increase immunization coverage and achieve better public health targets.

Methods

This research used a semi-qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach. Qualitative research was chosen because it aimed to understand the behavior of healthcare workers and the interpersonal communication processes that occur in efforts to raise public awareness about immunization.

Pangkuh Raya is one of the working areas of the Muara Teweh Community Health Center (UPT) and comprises diverse educational, economic, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds, which can be a factor hindering public awareness. Health workers on duty need to have good interpersonal communication skills to effectively convey information about immunization. There is a lack of mentoring programs such as home visits by health workers or health cadres in hard-to-reach areas. Empathetic and persuasive communication can change negative public perceptions of immunization. When health workers have good relationships with the community, they tend to be more trusted, which can be used to improve the achievement of the immunization program.

Data is collected through:

1. Data Transcription: Transforming interview data into In-Depth Interviews
2. Participatory Observation
3. Documentation Study

The instrument used in this research is the questionnaire method, which is used to obtain data regarding the relationship between the role of cadres during and outside the integrated health post (posyandu) and complete basic immunization. The questionnaire is divided into two, namely: a closed questionnaire and an open questionnaire.

Results and Discussions

Analysis of Health Worker Behavior

1. Factors Influencing Health Worker Behavior

Research result:

- a. Internal Factors:
 - i. Health workers' knowledge of immunization is very good due to routine training from the Health Service.
 - ii. Intrinsic (desire to help society) and extrinsic (performance incentives) motivation influence their commitment.
- b. External Factors:
 - i. Support facilities (e.g. visual educational tools) and Community Health Center policies that prioritize immunization.
 - ii. The diverse public responses, ranging from enthusiasm to resistance, influence the communication approaches of health workers.

Discussion

Health worker behavior is influenced by an integration of internal and external factors. A study by Amin et al. (2021) stated that regular training improves health workers' capacity to convey health information effectively. Meanwhile, WHO (2020) emphasized that non-material incentives (such as recognition) often have a greater impact on health worker motivation in remote areas. This finding aligns with the situation at the Muara Teweh Community Health Center, where health workers reported being motivated by a sense of social responsibility despite limited resources.

Interpersonal Communication Strategies Used

Research result:

- a. Empathetic Approach: Health workers use simple language and real case examples (for example, stories of children who are sick because they were not immunized).
- b. Cultural Adaptation: Adapting language to the local context (e.g. using the term "vaccine" instead of "vaccine")
"immunization" to make it easier to understand).
- c. Ongoing Support: Regular visits to residents' homes to monitor children's development and answer parents' questions.

Impact of Health Worker Behavior on Public Awareness

Research result:

- a. Increased Participation: 75% of parents in the Community Health Center's work area started bringing their children for complete immunization after receiving intensive support.
- b. Attitude Change: People who were initially afraid of the side effects of immunization began to understand the importance of vaccination after open dialogue with health workers.
- c. Remaining Challenges: 25% of people still refuse immunization due to the influence of religious or family information.

Discussion

Interpersonal communication has been shown to be effective in increasing public awareness, as supported by a study by Glenton et al. (2020), which found that face-to-face interactions increased immunization compliance by up to 40%. However, resistance among minority groups suggests the need for a more holistic approach, such as involving religious or traditional leaders in immunization campaigns (Leask et al., 2022). In Muara Teweh, collaboration with integrated health post (Posyandu) cadres and community leaders has helped reduce resistance, but needs to be strengthened with more inclusive policies.

Case Study:

1. Experience of Health Workers in Raising Awareness

The Muara Teweh Community Health Center, located in Central Kalimantan, plays a vital role in improving public health in the region. One of the main challenges faced by health workers at this community health center is raising public awareness about the importance of health and disease prevention. The health workers' experience in raising public awareness can be seen in several approaches they use, such as:

- a. Routine Health Education: Health workers conduct educational activities that directly involve the community, both through outreach at village halls and through the increasingly popular use of social media. This education covers topics such as the importance of immunization, healthy lifestyles, and the prevention of infectious and non-infectious diseases.
- b. Individual and Group Approaches: Health workers at the Muara Teweh Community Health Center frequently employ a community-based approach. This approach emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships between health workers and the community to build trust, which then facilitates more effective delivery of health information.
- c. Experience-Based Approach: The experience of health workers who interact directly with communities also plays a crucial role in how they raise health awareness. For example, health workers involved in malaria eradication use their firsthand experience treating malaria cases to provide more in-depth information to communities about the importance of using mosquito nets and malaria prevention drugs.

d. This experience shows that approaches based on social relationships and direct influence tend to be more successful in increasing health awareness than using only a one-way information approach. "Health education carried out by health workers at Community Health Centers that is based on community and interpersonal relationships tends to be more effective in increasing public awareness about the importance of a healthy lifestyle" (WHO, 2024).

2. Community Response to the Applied Approach

Communities in Muara Teweh have shown varying responses to approaches implemented by health workers, depending on the method and context. Several factors influencing community response to health workers' approaches include:

- a. **Level of Trust in Health Workers:** Community trust in health workers plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of the approach implemented. At the Muara Teweh Community Health Center, health workers who have good relationships with the community and demonstrate empathy for their needs tend to receive positive responses. Conversely, a lack of trust can hinder community participation in health programs.
- b. **Community Readiness for Change:** Community response also depends heavily on their readiness to accept change, both in terms of healthy lifestyles and new methods of disease prevention. In some cases, people in Muara Teweh tend to be more receptive to change if they see immediate benefits, such as a decrease in infectious disease rates due to the adoption of healthy lifestyles recommended by health workers.
- c. **Participation in Health Programs:** One example of the approach's success is increasing community participation in immunization programs. Previously, the community lacked confidence in the benefits of immunization, but after systematic and transparent explanations by health workers, many parents began bringing their children for immunizations. The approach, which involved community leaders and community leaders, also accelerated the adoption of health programs at the Muara Teweh Community Health Center.

This research aligns with Pender's (2023) study, which states that public trust in health workers and their ability to provide clear and transparent information significantly influences community participation in health programs. This is consistent with Rosenstock's (2024) writing that public response to implemented health approaches tends to be more positive when they see direct benefits and hear from sources they trust.

The experience of health workers at the Muara Teweh Community Health Center in raising public health awareness demonstrates that a combination of community-based educational approaches and interpersonal relationships can be more effective than a one-way approach alone. In this regard, the experience of health workers directly engaging with the community plays a significant role in fostering trust and engagement in health programs.

Furthermore, community response to the implemented approach also depends heavily on several important factors. Trust in health workers, readiness for change, and community

involvement in the health program planning process all influence success. Approaches that accommodate local social and cultural values and involve community leaders have been shown to increase their effectiveness.

Overall, the approach taken by health workers at the Muara Teweh Community Health Center provides an example of good practice in increasing public health awareness and demonstrates how the role of health workers can be maximized to address health challenges at the community level.

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