

THE POTENTIAL OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) TRANSMISSION IN MEDAN CITY, INDONESIA

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Submission date: 20-Oct-2023 04:03PM (UTC+0700)

Submission ID: 2201672870

File name: THE_POTENTIAL_OF_CORONAVIRUS_COVID-19_TRANSMISSION_IN.pdf (511.29K)

Word count: 5926

Character count: 26059

ISSN: 0258-2724

DOI : 10.35741/issn.0258-2724.56.4.61

Research article

Social Sciences

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THE POTENTIAL OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) TRANSMISSION IN
MEDAN CITY, INDONESIA

印度尼西亚棉兰市冠状病毒(新冠肺炎)传播的潜力

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Received: May 22, 2021 ▪ Review: June 11, 2021 ▪ Accepted: July 20, 2021 ▪ Published: August 30, 2021

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Abstract

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, mainly caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome, remains a global challenge. This study aimed to identify the potential of COVID-19 transmission in Medan City, Indonesia, by utilizing a quantitative descriptive design with a survey method based on questionnaire administration on Google Form. A total of 293 respondents were selected as a research sample through the accidental sampling technique. This study showed that the majority of the respondents (195, or 66.4%) traveled outside the city/country; 210 respondents (71.7%) used public transportation such as online and public transport; 54 respondents (18.4%) were in the area with an infected patient. This survey also includes the parameters of mask wearing, social distancing, avoiding hand contact, paying in cash, washing hands before or after touching an object, visiting outdoor activities, soaking the clothes after arriving home, and chronic disease history. This research concludes that positive confirmed cases in Medan city demonstrate a fluctuating trend in the infected COVID-19 cases from the respondents with frequent travel history.

Keywords: COVID-19, Medan, Survey, Social Distancing, Transmission Potential

摘要 主要由严重急性呼吸系统综合症引起的冠状病毒(新冠肺炎)大流行仍然是一项全球挑战。本研究旨在利用定量描述设计和基于谷歌表格问卷管理的调查方法,确定印度尼西亚棉兰市新冠肺炎传播的潜力。通过偶然抽样技术,共有293名受访者被选为研究样本。这项研究表明,大多数受访者(195人,或66.4%)到过城市/国家以外的地方;210名受访者(71.7%)使用在线和公共交通工具等公共交通工具;54名受访者(18.4%)位于有感染患者的地区。这项调查还包括戴口罩

, 社交距离, 避免手接触, 现金支付, 接触物体前后洗手, 参加户外活动, 到家后浸泡衣服和慢性病史等参数。该研究得出的结论是, 棉兰市的阳性确诊病例表明, 经常旅行历史的受访者感染新冠肺炎病例呈波动趋势。

关键词: 新冠肺炎, 棉兰, 调查, 社交距离, 传播潜力

I. INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2019, the emergence of an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) was similar to the Severe Acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) outbreak 17 years ago. However, the case fatality rate (CFR) of COVID-19 was still lower than that of SARS, i.e., 2% and 10%, respectively [1]. Despite lower CFR, the number of COVID-19 cases increased more rapidly, and they spread to other 27 countries in a short period [2].

Responding to this situation, the World Health Organization (WHO), as the biggest global health organization, has classified the risk caused by the coronavirus in the high category at a global level and declared that the outbreak constitutes a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) since January 30, 2020 [3]. As of February, 44,885 cases were COVID-19 positive confirmed, with details of 44,409 cases in China and 496 cases in other 27 countries, including Hongkong, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Australia, Germany, Vietnam, United States, France, Macau, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Canada, Italy, Philippines, India, Russia, Spain, and also Nepal, Cambodia, Belgium, Finland, Sweden, and Sri Lanka (1 case each). Particularly, the number of death cases due to the COVID-19 in Indonesia was 1.114 [4].

The President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, announced that the first COVID-19 case in Indonesia was detected on Monday, March 20, 2020. One month after the first case reported, the number of COVID-19 cases in Indonesia was kept increasing. It was reported that there were 2,273 positive-confirmed patients per April 5, 2020, with a death rate of 8.7%.

Currently, COVID-19 has also spread in North Sumatera. North Sumatera Provincial Task Force for COVID-19 reported that the number of people infected by the coronavirus increased. As of June 2020, the total number of COVID-19 positive patients increased from 1,447 to 1,467. Furthermore, 92 people were dead, and 383 patients recovered from the disease. The North Sumatera Provincial Task Force spokesperson for

COVID-19 announced that Medan city in North Sumatera had the highest number of COVID-19 cases (960), where 58 people were reported dead 242 recovered from the diseases [30].

The SARS-COV-2 virus was considered to be transmitted among people primarily through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, talks, or exhales [5]. In addition, the transmission can be resulting from touching the face right after touching contaminated surfaces. However, the COVID-19 might infect people without any shown symptoms [6].

Responding to this situation, the Indonesian government has implemented numerous measures and efforts to prevent the pandemic by promoting social distancing. Social distancing suggested that the transmission of COVID-19 can be hindered if the people maintain their distance of at least 1 – 2 meters and do not make close contact with other people, and avoid large public gatherings [7].

The North Sumatera Provincial Task Force for COVID-19 has implemented various measures to stop the coronavirus spread, such as the appeal for social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing hands with soap. The government of North Sumatera Province has also issued policies and regulations for preventing and handling COVID-19 in schools, offices, and businesses. Closure of schools, shopping centers, tourism sites, and entertainment places is also applied to combat the transmission of COVID-19. However, even though the government needs support from its citizens to slow down the COVID-19 transmission, many people have not practiced the health protocols recommended by the government. Based on the online survey method using Google Form, we hypothesized that the COVID-19 transmission in Medan city could be analyzed in the behavioral study.

A preliminary survey conducted in Medan city found that many people violated health protocols, did not wear a mask during outdoor activities and did not maintain physical distance when shopping at the local store or in public transport. Based on the discussion earlier, it is necessary to conduct further research to study the

potential of coronavirus transmission in Medan city.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to identify the potential of COVID-19 transmission in Medan city. This study employed a quantitative descriptive design using the survey method by administering a web-based questionnaire on Google Form. A total of 293 respondents were selected as a research sample through the accidental sampling technique. Univariate analysis was performed in data analysis.

Due to the restriction of large public gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic, the conventional data collection method was modified to a web-based questionnaire. However, the researchers still considered the respondents' rights and the ethical value during the data collection. This study has been reviewed and has received ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of Universitas Sari Mutiara Indonesia No. 183/FUSM/VIII/2020.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results, it was obtained that the majority of the respondents (195 (66.6%)) traveled outside their country. The number of respondents who used public transport, such as online motorcycle taxi, public transport, bus, taxi, or train, was 210 (71.7%), as summarized in Table 1. It was also found that 54 respondents (18.4%) reported that they were where the people were infected with COVID-19. In this case, the virus transmission could occur due to direct contact with an infected person in a vehicle.

Table 1.
Respondent frequency distribution based on potential COVID-19 transmission in Medan city, Indonesia

| Criteria | Yes | | No | |
|--|------|-------|------|-------|
| | f | % | f | % |
| Travel intercity/ around the country | 195* | 66.4* | 98 | 33.6 |
| Public & online transport | 210* | 71.7* | 83 | 28.3 |
| Wearing mask | 167 | 57.0 | 126* | 43.0* |
| Social distancing | 109 | 37.2 | 184* | 62.8* |
| Shaking hands | 130* | 44.6* | 163 | 55.6 |
| Hand sanitizer | 156 | 53.2 | 137* | 46.8* |
| Cash payment | 283* | 96.6* | 10 | 3.4 |
| Eating in a restaurant | 180* | 61.4* | 113 | 38.6 |
| COVID-19 infected area | 54* | 18.4* | 239 | 81.6 |
| Sanitizing sink | 114 | 38.9 | 179* | 61.1* |
| Washing hands with soap | 122 | 41.6 | 172* | 58.4* |
| Hand sanitizers, masks, antiseptic soap at home. | 177 | 60.4 | 116* | 39.6* |
| Washing clothes | 86 | 29.4 | 207* | 70.6* |
| Washing hair | 125 | 57.3 | 168* | 42.7* |
| Chronic diseases | 31* | 10.6* | 262 | 89.4 |

* Potential for COVID-19 transmission

The results of this study are in line with Yuliani's theory, which states that the transmission of the virus may occur due to several factors, such as coming into contact with infected animals, working or visiting healthcare facilities with confirmed cases, being infected by COVID-19 in other infected areas or countries, and having a history of traveling to areas with high infection rates [8]. Furthermore, to prevent the transmission of COVID-19, it is suggested to use disposable tissue paper when sneezing or coughing and avoid touching the face, particularly around the areas of eyes, nose, or mouth, because it can be a portal for the virus into the body [9]. Contact can be defined as an individual who has spent time in close-range physical proximity with an infectious patient and can communicate the virus to other individuals. The network of contacts may include the connection of an individual with family members, neighbors, friends, teachers, coworkers, healthcare workers, or social community members [10].

Supported by the findings of positive confirmed cases in Medan city, the trend seems to fluctuate. These tracing results no longer dominated the case findings but mostly originated from patients who had a travel history from other provinces. The Director-General of Disease Prevention and Control at the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, who was also acting as the spokesperson for Indonesia's COVID-19 Task Force, Achmad Yurianto, stated that individuals who travel have a higher potential to come into contact with both asymptomatic patients and patients with mild COVID-19 symptoms [11]. Thus, under the COVID-19 Task Force Circular No. 4 the Year 2020, people who travel need to show a health certificate stating a negative status based on polymerase chain reaction (PCR) or rapid antigen test results from the local health offices, hospitals, clinics, and other health facilities.

The Indonesian government has implemented numerous measures to prevent and eradicate the spread of COVID-19 based on 3M applications, namely wearing a mask, washing hands, and social distancing. The present study, which included 293 respondents in Medan City, demonstrates that 126 respondents (43%) reported not wearing a mask when gathering or being outdoor, 184 respondents (62.8%) did not maintain their distance with other people of at least 1 meter when shopping, working or worshipping. The other 130 respondents (44.6%)

still shake hands with others, 283 respondents (96.6%) still pay in cash that had been touched by the COVID-19 infected persons; 172 respondents (58.4%) did not wash their hands before and after touching an object.

The data shows that the calls for wearing masks and practicing health protocols when doing outdoor activities are still ignored. Other papers also reported several reasons for not wearing masks, such as feeling uncomfortable and forgetting to wear masks [12]. Some other people even reported the feeling that their area was safe so that they did not need to practice social distancing or wear a mask [13]. Moreover, despite the awareness of COVID-19 transmission potential, some people still ignore the health protocols because of the distress caused by the pandemic [14]. People are uncertain about the end of the pandemic, but they have to work to live and recover their domestic financial issues [15]. The government suggests the people be disciplined in observing 3M movement in their daily routines to stop coronavirus transmission. According to a previous report, the results of international research found that wearing a cloth mask can help reduce the transmission risk by 45 percent [16].

The Indonesian task force for COVID-19 explained that cloth masks could be used as a substitute for medical masks to reduce the risk of transmission in public places. The number of asymptomatic cases has completed the socialization of wearing cloth masks. Asymptomatic individuals may not be aware that they have the virus in their body and can transmit the COVID-19 [17] if they do not wear a mask when interacting and in close-range proximity with other people. The infection may occur after exposure to only one droplet of contaminated saliva or respiratory secretion [18]. Therefore, to anticipate this, people are suggested to keep wearing their masks in public places. However, the benefits of these cloth masks can be obtained as long as they meet the requirements to support their effectiveness [19]. As part of the 3M movement, handwashing can also help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission [20]. The WHO pleads the people to thoroughly wash their hands for 20-30 seconds according to the suggested instructions. The use of a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol is suggested if there is no water and soap [21].

Adhering to the health protocols is a key to break the chains of transmission and suppress the virus. Awareness and discipline in complying with the health protocols by the individual and all community members can protect people and

prevent virus transmission [22]. Based on this study, many people were not still fully aware of the potential of the COVID-19 transmission, where 180 respondents (61.4%) still ate at stalls/restaurants, 172 respondents (58.4%) did not wash hands when arriving home, and 207 respondents (70.6%) did not bathe and soak their clothes in hot water or detergent right after arriving home [23]. This data shows that many people did not care about personal hygiene. During the COVID-19 pandemic, people should maintain personal and environmental hygiene because objects that carry the COVID-19 can pass on the infections when people touch them [24]. These suggestions are consistent with the experts who advocate that the spread of COVID-19 occurred due to contact with infected people. It is necessary always to practice the health protocols and maintain personal hygiene during outdoor activities [25].

In most cases, many people are not aware that they are contaminated by the virus when doing regular activities. People may have the COVID-19 on the surface of their clothes or things that they mostly use, resulting in increased transmission potential to their family members. Therefore, people must limit the time spending outside the home, avoid large crowds, practice social distancing, avoid using crowded public transportations, use takeaway or delivery foodservice and eat at home [26].

A study by Lancet Global Health shows that people worldwide are at an increased risk if exposed to the COVID-19. The crisis of chronic disease and the failure of global public health to stem the emergence of risk factors that are actually preventable make the world vulnerable to any acute health emergencies such as COVID-19 [27]. The interaction between chronic diseases that continue to increase globally and risk factors, such as obesity, hypertension, diabetes, and cholesterol, can increase the vulnerability of individuals to the exposure [28].

Based on the present research on 293 people in Medan city, it was obtained that 31 respondents (10.6%) had a history of chronic diseases such as diabetes and other diseases related to kidney, heart, and respiratory. Despite the small percentage of chronic disease history (10.6%), it is still considered a high-risk factor in the virus infection. Besides, the risk of complication in people with chronic disease history is most likely higher, particularly in the elderly and those with multiple chronic conditions. The risk of death also increases among older people and those who suffer from diabetes, heart disease, blood clotting problems,

or those who have shown signs of sepsis. On average, the death rate due to the COVID-19 is 1%. Moreover, it increases to 6% in people with cancer, hypertension, or chronic respiratory disease, 7% in diabetic patients, and 10% in patients with heart disease. Meanwhile, the mortality rate due to COVID-19 in people aged 80 years or older was 15% higher [29].

IV. CONCLUSION

In summary, positive confirmed cases in Medan city demonstrate a fluctuating trend as the COVID-19 infected cases referred to the respondents with frequent travel history. Therefore, it is suggested to stay at home and not to travel during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic unless for urgent purposes. Additionally, any outdoor activities were essential to wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash hands with soap or clean them using hand sanitizer. Practicing entering and leaving the house protocols during the pandemic might effectively hinder the COVID-19 transmission. The novelty of this work is in the fact that it seeks to investigate the current pandemic situation and understand the behavior of preventing COVID-19 transmission.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank Universitas Sari Mutiara Indonesia for funding this research.

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