

## **IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE ELDERLY THROUGH PARTICIPATION IN THE ACTIVITIES OF POSYANDU LANSIA (INTEGRATED COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICE OF ELDERLY)**

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### **Abstract**

The development of the elderly population in Indonesia is interesting to observe because its population tends to increase every year. The purpose of this study was to analyze the factors associated with the participation of the elderly in the activities of Posyandu Lansia and its relationship with improving the quality of life of the elderly. This study uses a qualitative method. Data were collected through observation, interview and documentation study. Informants were midwife, cadres of Posyandu Lansia and the elderly. The results showed that the factors supporting participation of the elderly were the motivation to be healthy, the desire to meet and share experiences with friends, support from health providers as well as their family. Support from health providers such as a good health service, availability of health consultation and check-up facilities and also free medicines. Support from the family was the willingness to deliver the elderly so that they can participate in the Posyandu activities. On the other hand, the inhibiting factors for elderly participation were not knowing the benefits of Posyandu Lansia, the low level of education, and reluctance to take the elderly to Posyandu Lansia. There was a positive relationship between participation and the quality of life of the elderly. The elderly who actively participate in Posyandu lansia were healthier, because they could monitor their health and feel happy because their lives are more meaningful. Conversely, the elderly who were not active could not monitor their health and feel unhappy and lonely. Based on this research it was concluded that the quality of life of the elderly could be improved through active participation in the activities of Posyandu Lansia.

Keywords: Elderly, Posyandu Lansia, Quality of life, Participation

### **Introduction**

Naturally, the process of human development starts from infancy, children, adolescents, adulthood and then becomes old (Hurlock, 2017). Thus, being elderly is something that will be faced by humans, especially those who are lucky to be able to live until old age. Being a healthy and happy elderly is everyone's hope.

The number of elderly people worldwide has increased quite sharply so that by 2025 the elderly population is estimated to reach 1.2 billion people. In Indonesia, the development of the elderly population is also interesting to observe because from year to year there is a significant increase. In 2016 the number of the elderly population was 20.18 million while in 2017 it increased to 23.4 million people. (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2013). As a consequence, by 2025 Indonesia will be ranked 4th with the largest number of elderly people, after China, India and the United States.

A large number of the elderly population in Indonesia will bring both positive and negative impacts. This will have a positive impact if the elderly remain healthy, active and productive. On the other hand, it will have a negative impact if the elderly experience various problems both physically and psycho-socially. Judging from the physical aspects, the problems commonly suffered by the elderly are easy to fall, easily tired, weight loss, impaired vision and hearing, and difficulty in defecating. Meanwhile, from the psycho-social aspect, the problems that tend to be experienced are social, depression, reduced income due to retirement. The social problem experienced by the elderly is usually the lack of social contact with family and friends. This results in feelings of loneliness and inattention due to a lack of contact with others. The elderly also often experience of depression due to feelings of loss such as loss of love due to the death of a spouse or abandoned by children because they are married. The elderly also feel unproductive because the income is much decreased, making it difficult to fill their needs.

To provide optimal health services to the elderly, the Indonesian government has implemented the Posyandu lansia program. The purpose of the Posyandu lansia activities is to increase the reach of health services to the elderly by the needs of the elderly. Besides, it was aimed to increase community participation in encouraging and facilitating the elderly to remain active and independent. To improve the welfare of the elderly, the participation of the elderly in carrying out activities in Posyandu lansia was very necessary.

### **Literature review**

Participation means the participation of a person or group of community members in an activity. The participation was carried out as a result of social interactions between individuals (Totok and

Subianto, 2015). According to Mikkelsen (2001), there are two types of participation, namely transformational participation, and instrumental participation. Transformational participation whose goal is to achieve a higher goal while instrumental participation is participation to achieve certain goals. Furthermore, Mikkelsen distinguishes forms of participation into 2 namely real and abstract. Real participation such as money, property, energy, and skills while abstract participation in the form of ideas, social participation and participation in decision making. Mikkelsen (1995) also said that participation is the voluntary contribution even without taking part in decision making. Meanwhile, Slamet (1993) argues that there are several conditions for being able to participate effectively. First, is the opportunity to participate. Many programs do not involve community participation due to lack of information about when and in what form the participation is carried out. Second, is the willingness to participate. The opportunity provided to mobilize community participation will not be meaningful if the community cannot participate. Third, the willingness to participate.

According to Slamet (1993), several factors hinder a person's participation, namely gender, age, level of education, level of income and type of work. Participation given by women is different from men. This is due to the existing coating system in society, which distinguishes the position between women and men. The difference in a position further shows differences in the rights and obligations of men and women. The difference of age in society raises the old and young groups that distinguish them for example in expressing opinions and making decisions. The education factor can influence participation because with education someone is easier to communicate and responsive to innovation. The large level of income will provide greater opportunities to participate. Meanwhile, the type of work of someone will determine the level of income and spare time to enable him to participate. On the other hand, Ife and Tesoriero (2008) said that certain conditions encourage people to participate. These conditions are that they consider the issue or activity important, their participation will make changes, and there are appreciation and support.

Related to conditions related to the participation of the elderly, there are several problems experienced by the elderly, namely economic, social, health and psychological problems. Economic problems in the elderly are characterized by declining work productivity, for example, due to retirement. This affects the fulfillment of life's needs. Social problems, which are characterized by a lack of social contact both with family and friends. This results in feelings of loneliness due to a lack of attention. Health problems, because in the elderly cells decline due to the aging process that

causes physical weakness and the emergence of various degenerative diseases. Psychological problems, including feelings of loneliness, isolation from the environment, helplessness, uselessness, lack of confidence, dependency. With these various problems, the elderly need to get support, which is a comfortable environment both from family and community. The environment that accepts the elderly as they are, who regard them as people who are worthy of respect. One of the efforts made to empower the elderly is to involve their participation in Posyandu lansia activities. The Posyandu lansia is an integrated community health service that is implemented to provide health services for the elderly, in certain areas, which are driven by the community (Erpandi, 2014). According to Azizah (2011), various activities exist in the elderly Posyandu. These activities are examinations of daily activities, mental status, nutritional status, blood pressure, hemoglobin, blood sugar, protein in the urine. Also, it provides referral facilities, supplementary feeding, home visits for elderly people who cannot attend and counseling. Thus it can be said that the participation of the elderly in Posyandu lansia activities is very important as an effort to improve the welfare of the elderly.

## **Research methods**

This was qualitative research conducted in the village of Pekik Nyaring, Pondok Kelapa sub-district, Bengkulu Tengah district, Bengkulu Province, Indonesia. The number of informants were 11 people which consist of 1 midwife, 2 Posyandu lansia cadres and 8 elderly people. Data were collected by using observation, interviews and documentation studies and analyzed qualitatively.

## **Research result**

Posyandu lansia was carried out its activities once a month. There were several activities carried out at the Posyandu lansia in the village of Pekik Nyaring. These activities were 1. Record attendance, to find out the number of participants present at an activity. The elderly who attend must be recorded before the Posyandu activities begin so that the cadres know how many were attending each month. This was an indicator that shows the level of activeness of the elderly. 2. Weigh weight and measure blood pressure. Increased weight could cause someone having the risk of high blood pressure. Thus the elderly should weigh and measure blood pressure so that they can anticipate the risk of suffering from high blood pressure. 3. Provision of additional food. Supplementary feeding

is one of the strategies undertaken so that the elderly eager to come to the Posyandu lansia. This was also intended to increase nutritional intake in the elderly. Additional food such as providing green bean porridge. 4. Sang the elderly Mars song and the national anthem Indonesia Raya. This activity would make them feel excited and increase their sense of nationalism so that they are happy to participate in the Posyandu lansia activities. 5. Provide counseling about a healthy lifestyle for the elderly. Counseling was performed by doctor so that all elderly people knew and applied a healthy life. 6. Consultation about elderly diseases. The consultation was carried out by a doctor and the elderly were invited to tell what they felt which was related to their health condition. This effort was also carried out to be able to detect early illnesses suffered by the elderly. 7. Providing drugs for free by the disease of the elderly. This was the main objective of establishing a Posyandu lansia, which was to keep the elderly healthy so they can work and be more independent.

Based on the results of this study, the participation of the elderly in various Posyandu lansia activities was high enough. Consequently, this was supported by various factors. Supporting factors for elderly participation include good collaboration between Posyandu cadres and health providers (doctor and midwife). Posyandu cadres were members of the community, usually a housewife, who were willing to contribute to manage the activities at the Posyandu lansia. Cadres were very important because they become the connector agent between the elderly and health providers. Cadres duties were preparing various things needed to carry out Posyandu lansia activities such as mats, tables, chairs, and scales. Cadres recorded the number of elderly people who attended each month so that the level of activeness of the elderly in attending the Posyandu activities was known. On the other hand, health providers namely doctor and midwife provide good services to the elderly. According to elderly informants, they were interested in participating in Posyandu lansia activities because they could seek treatment for free, consult about their health and gain knowledge about healthy lifestyles. Good knowledge and the application of healthy lifestyles in daily life can improve the health of the elderly so that they can work and not depend much on others. Another factor that makes the elderly interested in coming to Posyandu lansia was the existence of arisan held at the end of Posyandu lansia activities. This arisan was an activity to collect money for 10,000 rupiahs per person. The money was collected by the cadres and every member could get the money in turn. This social gathering makes the elderly excited to come because each elderly hopes that she would get the saved money at the Posyandu lansia. According to the cadres, this money functioned

as joint saving and could be used if needed. Arisan was also a means to interact where the elderly can gather and communicate with others. Arisan has become “ a time for having fun “.

According to Ife and Tesoriero (2008), several factors encourage a person to participate in an activity. These factors were activities which considered important and bring some changes as well as support and appreciation. The main factor encourage elderly participation was because they could control their health regularly. The elderly also got knowledge about healthy lifestyles to avoid disease so that they remain healthy and could be active. On the other hand, cadres and health providers also provide good services to the elderly. Family support also played an important role in increasing the participation of the elderly in Posyandu lansia activities. In the village, the elderly usually lived together with one of their children’s family. The child usually remind the elderly when the Posyandu implementation time arrived and took the elderly to the Posyandu because most elderly could not go alone. Activities at Posyandu lansia and the desire to meet and share experiences with friends make the elderly feel happy and excited.

On the other hand, several factors influence the participation of the elderly to participate in Posyandu activities. Slamet (in Totok and Subianto, 2015) said that the factors that hamper elderly participation were opportunity, ability, and willingness. Based on the results of the study, the elderly women came to the Posyandu more often than the elderly men. This is because the Posyandu lansia was held at 9 a.m, while in the morning the elderly men were still working. Almost all elderly men work as farmers. The second factor was the ability. Most elderly men and women only have an elementary school education. Thus, their level of knowledge and understanding was low. According to male elderly informants, they did not participate in Posyandu activities because they did not understand the benefits of Posyandu lansia. Meanwhile, elderly women mostly participate in Posyandu activities because they were invited by their children who were already known about the benefits of posyandu. Another factor that cause the elderly to not be able to attend posyandu activities was because they have to look after their grandchildren who were still small. Some elderly people who lived with their children were sometimes tasked with looking after their young grandchildren while their parents work. This is a difficult choice and a solution must be found.

## **Conclusion**

The quality of life of the elderly can be improved through their participation in activities of Posyandu lansia. In Posyandu, the elderly could check their health condition regularly, consult with health providers, got free treatment so that their health is always maintained. The elderly could also socialize with other people and meet their friends. The elderly could tell each other stories, share experiences which was very good for making them happy to avoid feeling lonely and stressed. However, there are supporting factors and obstacles to the participation of the elderly in Posyandu activities. They were good service provided by cadres and health provider, and family support such as taking the elderly to the posyandu. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factor was the lack of knowledge about the benefits of Posyandu lansia and elderly men who were still actively working to make a living. Based on the results of this study, it was suggested to cadres and health providers to be more pro-active in disseminating information about the benefits of Posyandu lansia to the community. Family support is very important in increasing the participation of the elderly in Posyandu activities. Through active participation in Posyandu activities, it was hoped that the elderly will be healthier, be able to continue their activities according to their age, and feel happy.

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