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# Dole-Dole Tradition in Health Seeking Behavior of Buton Society, Southeast Sulawesi

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** The cause of the disease is naturalistic and personalistic. Perception of the cause and cure of the disease is personalistic and also very close to the habits of the people of Buton.

**Objective:** The purpose of this study is to examine and analyze the pattern of Buton community health-seeking behavior on infants and under five years based on personalistic etiology.

**Materials and Method:** This research used a qualitative ethnographic approach. The research site was conducted at Baubau. 12 informants were interviewed: 4 regular informants, 4 key informants, and 4 supporting informants. Data collection processes were by observation technique, in-depth interview, documentation, and FGD. Selection of informants was purposive sampling. Data were analyzed in the cultural domain for the category according to the research focus.

**Results:** The results showed that the pattern of treatment seeking in infants and under five years who experience diseases starting from home treatment, then to health services and traditional medicine. This may be reversed by the general pattern of treatment seeking that starts from the traditional to the health service, but in the dole-dole tradition the last option is to carry out this ceremony for healing. This tradition is passed down through generations and is considered a way which is powerful in prevention, immunization, and healing in the Buton community especially in infants and under five years who experience health problems.

**Conclusions:** The conclusion of this study is that the pattern of treatment seeking of the Buton society is based on the belief in traditional healing performed by heredity and is considered more successful than medical treatment. It is suggested that the provision of information increase public understanding of the belief in health (medical) services without leaving a belief in local traditions.

**Keywords:** Health, Seeking, Behavior, Treatment, Tradition, Dole-Dole, Buton

## BACKGROUND

Indonesia is known for its cultural diversity which influences many people's social life, including in health field<sup>1,2</sup>. Health and culture adopted by the community are closely related to the main deterrents of healthy-sick perception; causes and cures<sup>3-5</sup>. Every adherent

of culture has their respective perceptions about the treatment and cure of a disease that is difficult to receive medically. Although society has entered the modern era and experienced the development of mindset, including socio-cultural development, still many traditions are maintained until now. This also applies to the culture of Buton people who always maintain their traditions, including their health. One of the traditions of the Butonese society that is considered a healing is the dole-dole tradition<sup>6-8</sup>. The dole-dole tradition is a traditional immunization activity in infants and toddlers in Buton culture. This tradition is especially for children who are

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often sick or this tradition as a provision of immunity against the possibility of disease and less normal growth.

Historically, dole-dole originated from the era Sipanjonga (*one of Mia Patamiana*, founder of the kingdom of Buton). Sipanjonga's marriage with *Sibaana* (brother of Simalui) gave birth to a son named Betoambari. It is said that, since infancy, Betoambari always experience sickly. Seeing this condition, Sipanjonga then held a ritual ceremony of treatment for his son. As a result, after the treatment ceremony was completed, Betoambari was gradually healed. This ceremony is called dole-dole (Munafi, et al, 2015). Until now, this tradition is believed to cure diseases, especially in children. Dole-doles are always carried out when the children of the Buton tribe are affected by the disease and do not recover even after receiving medical services.

According to the beliefs of Buton people, children who have passed the dole-dole ceremony will be spared the disease and will recover from the illness suffered. This community belief is based on the ancestors who hold fast the dole-dole tradition and no one dares to break unless it will be affected even worse. This shaped the behavior of the Buton community in the pattern of seeking treatment when there are health problems in children.

The Buton people who believe in the dole-dole tradition as a way to cure the disease are the outcome and the internalized response in their lives thus shaping and influencing behavior. This behavior is not expected to have a negative impact on the belief of the Butonese people on health care in the pattern of seeking treatment. Based on the background that has been described previously, so the purpose of this research is to examine and analyze the pattern of treatment of Butonese people in infants and under five years.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

This type of research used a qualitative ethnographic approach<sup>9-11</sup> to explore the phenomenon of Buton community treatment seeking. The research site was conducted at Baubau. The 12 informants in this study were interviewed, consisting of 4 regular informants, 4 supporting informants namely shaman (*bisa'*) and health workers and 4 key informants ie religious figures, community leaders, and local humanist. Data collection processes were by observation techniques, in-depth interviews, documentation and Focus group Discussion

related to the pattern of treatment seeking. Selection of informants was conducted by purposive sampling, with criteria: the Buton community who conducted a traditional treatment seeing known as dole-dole tradition. The focus of this research is to analyze the perception of informants about the sign, the perceived symptoms and the way of healing that is believed by the people of Buton.

## RESULTS

### *Characteristics of informants*

Table 1 shows the characteristics of informants in the Dole-Dole Tradition study on the Buton. 12 informants have different educational backgrounds: entrepreneurs, housewives, religious leaders, community leaders, humanists and health workers. They have different levels of education from elementary school to post-graduate. *Bisa'* generally educated elementary or junior high school.

The table illustrates that all age-old informants indicate if dole-dole traditions have been inherent in their lives. The educational background and work of informants varied from the lowest to higher education not necessarily disregarding the traditions that had long been adhered to by their ancestors. This shows that in the dole-dole tradition does not recognize the level of education and age and even work. Anyone with a low or high educational background will always continue to preserve it as long as it becomes a belief.

### *Health seeking behavior*

The results of the search for in-depth information were made to the baby's parents who carried out the doles and believed to be the healing endeavors such as the following informant's expression:

"My first child used to walk the week after the doles. Before in the dole-dole, there is a belief that my child will recover ... this kind of like obligations so it must be dole-dole. This is part of the traditions of the people here, meaning there is confidence and always as expected. My child is already taking medicine, immunization is also but not yet healed because it has not dole-dole. This is not just conservation but belief if it is not implemented then there will always be hurdles such as sickly, weak, disadvantaged, and so on .. "(Srd, 42 years, March 15, 2017).

It can be described that informants consider dole-doles as mandatory because there will be consequences obtained if they are negligent. Despite having wandered away they will return to Buton to carry out the dole-dole tradition, especially for treatment. The same thing was revealed by another informant:

“... what the children feel, the name is *kaepeta* .. everything that is felt just if not take it will not heal, then we have children will not heal. Usually parents see the situation, usually, parents say this not in dole-dole “(As, 45 years, date May 04, 2017)

Based on the informants' expression that this tradition has been carried out since their ancestors, the signs and symptoms suffered by their children can be identified and the treatment according to what is believed

to be dole-dole. This information is reinforced by local community leaders, as follows:

“Actually, people do dole-dole with the hope to get the desired results. This hope becomes confidence because it has been to health services but has not healed so that psychologically can feel healing. Not only that, this belief is supported by the intention of being able to ‘... in essence, people’s belief in this tradition (dole-dole) can heal and it happens, let alone one who is full of hope for the healing of his child. Some do not do it because their ancestors did not do it, that’s fine “(Lm.Ars, 49, May 14, 2015).

The explanation from local community leaders confirms that the doles are executed with intention and hope to heal so that they get psychic psychically.

**Table 1. Characteristics of informant**

No.	Informants	Age (year)	Education Level	Occupation
1.	Srd	42	Senior High School	Private
2.	Nrm	42	Vocational High School	Private
3.	Wa.M	50	Senior High School	Housewife
4.	As	45	Bachelor Degree	Teacher
5.	Mr.	62	Elementary School	Bisa'
6.	Sm	62	Elementary School	Bisa'
7.	Nr	72	Junior High School	Bisa'
8.	LM.Ars	49	Master Degree	Religious leader
9.	H.SIH	62	Secondary Technical School	Religious leader
10.	H. Srl	62	Senior High School	Community leader
11.	IK	25	Master Degree	Humanist
12.	Ms	53	Bachelor Degree	Health provider

Source: Primary Data, 2017

## DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, it is found that the dole-dole tradition is done through the inheritance process from generation to generation. Despite the modern times but the people of Buton still closely with the traditions that become his life cycle including, dole-dole tradition. They believe that the tradition brings blessings and health and for the future for the child. This tradition became an option in medicine because it was

carried out by the predecessors of the Buton community and became a preserved heritage.

According to Koentjaraningrat<sup>12</sup>, that at the initial stage of the socialization process, a child is exposed, among others, how to eat, what food to eat, how to urinate, and others. These habits continue to be done until the child is mature and even old. These habits strongly affect the behavior of health that is very difficult to change<sup>12</sup>.

Although, in general, people who preserve the-dole-dole hard to explain how the tradition can heal, but it can be said that the belief of Buton people will ritual in life comes from his understanding of the cause of the disease. This is the same disclosed by Foster and Anderson (1986), that there are two kinds of causes of disease that is the cause of personalistic and naturalistic.

In the dole-dole tradition, there are two kinds of treatment based on the perceived cause, but more dominant is the personalistic-oriented illness or perceived illness. Buton Society's view of the illness experienced that when the child has felt or the Butonese call it *Kaepeta*, then the method of healing is to carry out the dole-dole tradition. Involvement of shaman (*bisa*) who leads dole-dole rituals is believed to be healing because of his personalistic treatment, through prayers on the basis of the beliefs of the child's parents to heal.

Based on research, Buton people do dole-dole tradition is intended to prevent the occurrence of things that are not desirable in children such as growth and developmental delays, weakness of the physical condition or the disease.

According to *bisa*, for treatment, there is really no age limit as long as there is a request from the parent or family to do dole-dole. But in general, dole-dole is done at the age of five because according to the beliefs of Buton people at that age usually have to show symptoms of typical illness such as scabies so it must be done dole-dole. Safitri<sup>13</sup>, revealed the implementation of dole-dole is not determined at what age the child. Whenever it can be done the origin of "good days" please take place. Related to the theory of Lawrence Green<sup>14</sup>, that which facilitates the formation of behavior is a predisposing factor such as the existence of tradition held by the community.

Analyzing information from dole-dole actors, as well as efforts to treat the disease in children, there are two patterns made by the people of Buton, ie there are first visited the health service but not healed finally treat by doing dole-dole.

There are also people from the beginning have been convinced that what is felt or suffered by his son can only be treated with dole-dole ceremony, but when later not healed also just take advantage of health services. Based on in-depth interviews, this study also found that the health behavior of the Butonese community, the

early pattern of its treatment seeking until it was healed, still believes that dole-dole is the solution for those who inherit this tradition. This is in line with research conducted by Syahrin on the traditional medicine of the Butonese people that the Buton society's view of disease is a series of cultural processes.

According to Foster, Anderson<sup>15</sup>, the symptoms that appear to each individual will be in different responses as well. When the symptoms that appear on the body is not too felt by people who seek treatment until the disease worsens, otherwise people who are more sensitive to the emergence of symptoms will be faster in seeking medical help and get a fast treatment as well. When associated with the dole-dole tradition, the symptoms of the disease that appear and demonstrated by the child will be known by the parents so that the treatment in accordance with the stages of healthy behavior is believed. This tradition became an option in medicine because it was carried out by the predecessors of the Buton community and became a preserved heritage. At the initial stage of the socialization process, a child is introduced, such as how to eat, what food to eat, how to urinate and others. These habits continue to be done until the child is mature and even grow old. These habits greatly affect health behavior that is very difficult to change<sup>12</sup>. The distinctive signs and symptoms identified by the Butonese community shape their behavior in the search for a treatment of the dole-dole tradition.

## CONCLUSIONS

The Buton community in this study has used health services, but the treatment-seeking behavior is based on the signs and symptoms that the traditional healing of dole-dole tradition is considered to be more successful than medical treatment. It is suggested that the provision of information increase public understanding of the belief in health (medical) services without leaving a belief in local traditions

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**Ethical Clearance:** Taken from ethical committee/research letter from Faculty of Public Health, Muslim University of Indonesia, Makassar Indonesia

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