

# Efforts to Prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections (HIV/AIDS) in Wakatobi District, Southeast Sulawesi Province

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## ABSTRACT

*Increasing number of people living with HIV/AIDS becoming a shared responsibility and a concern for programs to be achieved in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2030. An increasing number of cases also occurred in Wakatobi, 16 cases of HIV detected in 2018 increased to 19 new cases in 2019, which are mainly caused by changing risky sexual partners and unsafe sex. The purpose of this study was to explore efforts to prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections (HIV/AIDS) in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. The research method was a quasi-qualitative with a phenomenological approach to explore STI prevention efforts through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The research location was in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. The data sources were 7 people who were selected purposively with the following criteria: Health workers who handle infectious disease prevention were, 4 regular informants from the health office and the secretary of the Wakatobi HIV/AIDS control commission, 2 supporting informants from the owner of entertainment venues and women who accompany karaoke (ladies), with the head of the Department of Health as key informants. Secondary data were obtained from the Wakatobi District Health Office. The data collected was then analyzed by domain and scientifically narrated, the validity of the data is done by triangulation. Based on the results of the study, it was found that prevention efforts that have been carried out by the Health Service and the HIV/AIDS Prevention Commission (KPA) in collaboration with local agencies are conducting counselling and periodic checks every 6 months at night entertainment venues and providing information to the public, high school students about sexually transmitted infections (HIV/AIDS). Information was obtained that an approach to the community should be carried out through local communities and leaders, but funds are limited, so that prevention efforts are carried out according to budget allocations. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the Wakatobi Health Office and KPA had made efforts to prevent sexually transmitted infections in entertainment places and schools, although they were still limited due to limited budget allocations.*

**Keywords:** Prevention, HIV/AIDS, Wakatobi

## INTRODUCTION

### Background

The increasing number of people with HIV / AIDS is a shared responsibility because it is a threat to increasing pain and death rates. This issue has been a concern of the government and is one of the programs to achieve in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in 2030 that is to reach three zero, no more new HIV cases, no more AIDS-related death, no stigma and discrimination to people with HIV/AIDS. Indeed, this is a challenge amid the extending number of HIV cases and people dying from AIDS. Based on SIHA data from the Ministry of Health, the cumulative number of new case findings reported in January-June 2020 was 398,784 cases, while the number of

reported AIDS cases was 125,587. This number cannot depict the actual rate. Many of them are hiding their HIV status because they do not want to be rejected socially, so that it causes inaccurate data on the exact number of HIV case. The number of people with HIV/AIDS can be portrayed as an iceberg phenomenon, i.e., the number of cases reported is much smaller than the actual number.

Various programs have been carried out by the government in preventing and tackling HIV/AIDS, yet the number continues to increase. By looking at the age group, the average HIV-infected group is a young and productive group. Based on the data collected from the Indonesian Health Data and Information Center in 2016, HIV infection tends

to increase and most occur in the productive age cluster, between the age of 25 - 49 years and 20-24 years. At that age, activity, occupation, and environmental effects become one of the triggers for risky sexual intercourse. HIV has always been associated with sex-transmitted diseases because the most common cause of transmission is having multiple at-risk sexual partners.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) require the attention and cooperation of all parties including the public because health is a shared responsibility. Before infected, people should avoid the environment that allows STI transmission. It is highly important to provide education to the public, especially in at-risk populations to increase knowledge and concern towards sexual diseases. Kusnsan (2016) in his research revealed that knowledge contributes closely to the occurrence of Sexually Transmitted Infections.

An increase in HIV/AIDS cases was reported in Wakatobi, which 16 cases were detected in 2018, rising by 20 new cases in 2019. This case demands significant response by the relevant health service institution. Based on preliminary data, the Health Office and the Commission on HIV / AIDS have delivered education HIV / AIDS-related to high school students, although it is not carried out periodically due to budget deficiency. Besides, counseling and screening of lady escort at night club venues regularly every 6 months. Unfortunately, this prevention action has not involved community leaders and societies.

Based on the prior description, therefore it is interesting to review the efforts to prevent Sexually Transmitted Infections (HIV / AIDS) in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi.

## **SUBJECT AND METHOD**

This research method used a qualitative quasi with a phenomenological approach to explore STI prevention actions by in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation during the period of study. Research was located in Wakatobi Regency, Southeast Sulawesi. The data sources in this study included 7 people who were selected based on purposive with criteria: Health workers handling the prevention of infectious diseases. So, the results obtained: 4 ordinary informants from the health service and the secretary of Wakatobi HIV/AIDS countermeasures commission, 2 supporting informants from entertainment venue owners and lady escorts and the head of the health service as a key informant. Secondary data was collected from the Wakatobi Regency health office. Then, the data was categorised, reduced and analysed by domain, and interpreted by words or narrated scientifically. The last, the validity of the data was done by triangulation.

## **RESULTS**

This study was conducted by April 2021 in Wakatobi Regency by consideration of HIV / AIDS cases rate increasing every year. Number of informants

**Tabel 1.** Informants Characteristics

No	Informant	Age	Education	Occupation	Address	Details
1	Nrh	31	S1	PNS	Wangiwangi	IB
2	En	27	D3	PNS	Wangiwangi	IB
3	Mz	38	S1	KPA	Mandati	IB
4	Rs	30	D3	PNS	Jl. Wa Opu	IB
5	Mld	46	S2	PNS	Jl. Langge	IK
6	Rd	51	SMA	Swasta	Binongko	IP
7	Yl	23	SMA	Swasta	Wangiwangi	IP

Note: IB: Common informant. IK: Key informant, IP: Supporting informant

The table describes that the internal common informants are Health workers and KPAD Wakatobi who are people used to working and performing prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections / HIV. This is supported by work duration and educational background of informants.

Prevention efforts conducted

Based on the results of the study, the prevention efforts in the public are:

*“Doing counselling is carried out by sending letters, such as addressed to Senior high school, or mailing to district to inform local people, of course by considering budget.” (KPA)*

The same thing was expressed by the health service, as follows:

*“What has been routinely done was outreach program intended to society, which this year it was performed at Junior High school and Senior high school by 2020.” (Kasie)*

Health outreach by education on HIV / AIDS disease has been committed at junior high school or high school by the Health Service in collaboration with the commission to combat HIV / AIDS and health centres that have HIV cases. The goal is that school children can participate in improving health and can prevent sexually transmitted infections occurring in their environment.

Outreach to schools and some targets is also carried out by the Wangi-Wangi Health Centre located in the Wakatobi City:

*“We had conducted health outreach to local people, school children and teenagers. We named the program by ABAD (Aku tahu aku bangga) HIV/AIDS introduced school children by Wangi-Wangi Health Centre. Besides, early detection on pregnant women was reported from twelve rural areas. we had done the program and had plan for this year that we would be visiting every beauty shop.” (PKM)*

Puskesmas Wangi-wangi is a health service in Wakatobi City and routinely organises prevention actions both inside and outside building, such as early detection on pregnant women.

This is confirmed by the Head of P2P of wakatobi health office, as follows:

*“As for the prevention program done, we had been running many health outreaches, we collaborate with the KPA. In this case, our health workers in the Health Center had carried out some outreaches program, consisting of community, schools, and screening. Yet, it might have not run the emigration survey, the problem is that the village and subdistrict in this event should attend, to allow them coordinate with local health service.” (P2P).*

## DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the interview conducted, it obtained that prevention efforts carried out by the Health Service and the Commission on HIV / AIDS Prevention (KPA) in collaboration with local agencies are to conduct health outreach to junior and high school, and screening on pregnant women in 12 villages at Wangi-Wangi health care clinic. The health Centre clinic pays attention on HIV prevention efforts because new case is increasing every year. Education is carried out in the form of providing information to students about sexually transmitted infections including HIV / AIDS. Although there have been many activities, yet activities reaching and directly engaging local communities have not been widely performed. However, the approaches to the community through local leaders will be implemented if the funds needed are available because prevention efforts carried out must adjust to budget allocations.

The increase of sexually transmitted infections cases/HIV in Wakatobi is the basis for Prevention activities, especially towards groups at risk. Whalley & Wong's (1999) confirmed that the phenomenon of increase and spread cases of sexually transmitted infections occurred rapidly causing sexually transmitted infectious diseases potentially to increase the risk of HIV transmission through sexual intercourse. Hence, it requires attention in prevention and countermeasures. These efforts must certainly be supported from the service level provided in a comprehensive way.

The importance of STI prevention programs is to reduce pain and death because of STIs. In addition, it can prevent infection, possible complications, and adverse effects,

especially on pregnant women. Therefore, the Health Service in Wakatobi conducts screening on pregnant women because of a lot of cases in Indonesia, that housewives are infected from their husbands. Early detection is undertaken to find cases and reduce the possibility of complications in case pregnant women are confirmed positive (Asrina, 2021)

Interventions conducted to students are expected to alter the environment for behavior change. The existence of the I Know I Am Proud (ABAD) program initiated by the Wakatobi health service is a way to educate teenagers not to fall into the wrong relationship. This message has been designed by health workers so that teenagers can receive the message given. Also, they can participate actively and responsible for themselves. An emphasis on beware of not having premarital sexual relationship and not consuming alcohol and drugs, especially syringes. Because many studies show that the use of drugs injection, is closely related to the increased risk of being infected with STIs. Moreover, teenagers are always curious and want to experience new things to release their curiosity. Asrina & Palutturi (2020) revealed that adolescence is a stage of self-reflection, so it always responds to perceived stimuli without considering the consequences of the environmental factors.

Adolescents need to access information from reliable sources and according to their age level to behave responsibly. If adolescents obtain reproductive health information, they will have responsible knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors about the reproductive process. The impact of unavailability of adolescent information and understanding of reproductive health results in committing risky behaviors such as premarital sex (Nisaa, et al., 2019).

In addition to direct education, there should be intervention addressed to teenagers through social media, yet this has not been done by Wakatobi Health Service. Promoting health education through social media by interesting language and images needs to be considered. Given that teenagers receive more information from social media on their mobile phones. Lou et al. (2012) stated that exposure to media information will affect knowledge about AIDS / STIs. Through social media, it is expected that adolescents have knowledge on STIs prevention, although changes in knowledge do not always change behavior. At least, teenagers can behave positively towards STI prevention efforts including HIV / AIDS.

Beside the interventions to adolescents, the approach is also carried out to community leaders, although no prior intervention has been done because of budget adjustment. This approach is essential because it is a step to create positive opinions that can encourage people, particularly communities at risk. These community leaders play a vital role because they are mediators between health programs aimed at the community as the main target. Likewise, the community through community leaders should show positive support to the prevention works committed. Individual health behavior is a form of individual attitudes and habits that are a part of environment. A trigger on individual intends to adopt positive behaviors, strongly influenced by community social support from community leaders. Kemenkes RI (2010) stated that the approach to community leaders (bina suasana) is a way to create an opinion or social environment encouraging the public, populations behaving high risk, health workers to be willing to overcome the spread of HIV and AIDS.

This study focuses on the efforts to prevent sexually transmitted infections / HIV / AIDS conducted by the Wakatobi Health Office. Various challenges when the study took place, among others, are micro-scale restrictions due to the increasing number of Covid-19 infections.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of the study, the research concluded that the Wakatobi Health Office and the Commission on HIV / AIDS Prevention have made efforts to prevent sexually transmitted infections to schools yet are still limited to health outreach and screening on pregnant women in 12 villages at local health care handling HIV / AIDS cases because of budget adjustment.

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