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Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices toward Lymphatic Filariasis among People in Indra Jaya Sub-district, Pidie, Aceh, Indonesia

Abstract

Currently there are nearly 1.3 billion people who are at high risk for infection with lymphatic filariasis (LF), and an estimated 120 million people in 83 countries are already infected. The countries endemic with LF in South-east Asia regional are: Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste. There were 11,914 chronic cases in Indonesia reported with an estimated 19% prevalence of microfilaria rate. LF disease should be controlled through an elimination program, specifically by setting two pillars of activities: 1) interrupting the transmission with mass drug administration (MDA) in endemic areas, 2) treatment of both acute and chronic clinical cases of LF. In order to achieve 80-85 % MDA coverage, it is important to inform the communities about LF and the importance of MDA, as well as inform them regarding the possibility of presence of adverse effects after taking the drugs. Therefore, to maximize the role of society and to ensure the success of the MDA, programs require the preparation of a communication strategy, and for that, researchers need detailed information about knowledge, behavior, and attitudes of the public about a disease in an area that will be implementing intervention of LF elimination. The KAP survey was conducted in Indra Jaya sub-district in Pidie district. The results showed that 288 respondents (81.4%) knew or had heard of LF. A total of 70 (23.6%) respondents knew that filariasis is a transmissible disease. There were 342 (96.6 %) respondents who report preventing him/her self from mosquito bites among them, 69% (n=236) of respondents said that they used bed nets. Female respondents (43.8 % or n= 155) were more likely to seek treatment if there is a recurrent fever than men (26.6 % or n= 94) ($\chi^2=4.925$, $p = 0.02$).

118 women respondents (47.2 %) tended to go to the public health service to seek treatment, versus only 25.2 % (n= 63) men ($\chi^2=2.181$, $p = 0.13$). As many as 173 (48.9 %) respondents agreed that everybody in his/her village must take LF drugs to eliminate the disease. Respondents who believed that LF patients should be moved or isolated were 45.2 % (n= 160). There were 14.7 % (n= 52) of respondents who agreed that they would avoid a LF patient. I recommend that people's understanding of LF and MDA should be improved through a comprehensive awareness campaign carried out before MDA activities, the role of health centers as centers of health information should be maximized, the involvement of women in LF elimination campaign should be considered, and the Pidie health authority needs also to help in reducing stigma facing LF patients.

Keywords; Lymphatic filariasis, mass drug administration, LF elimination campaigns, stigma, women empowerment.

