

## ***OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS ON MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL DISORDERS IN THE WORKING AREA OF KEDURUS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER***

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Mental health is a crucial element of overall well-being; however, public awareness and understanding of mental disorders remain inadequate in many communities, particularly in low-resource settings. This study explores community perceptions of mental health and mental illness among patients visiting the Kedurus Public Health Center (Puskesmas Kedurus) in Surabaya. Using a descriptive quantitative approach, a total of 60 respondents were selected via purposive sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires based on national mental health literacy indicators and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results showed that more than 60% of participants demonstrated limited knowledge of early symptoms of mental illness, while approximately 70% exhibited negative attitudes or stigmatizing views toward individuals with mental disorders. Only around 30% recognized mental health as an essential part of daily well-being. These attitudes were shaped by cultural norms, insufficient public education, and restricted access to reliable mental health information. The findings underscore the need for sustained mental health education and stigma-reduction efforts at the primary care level. Community-based strategies, particularly those involving local leaders, may improve mental health literacy and foster a more supportive environment for individuals experiencing mental illness.*

## **Introduction**

Mental health is an essential component of overall well-being, encompassing emotional, psychological, and social dimensions that affect how individuals think, feel, act, and relate to others. A healthy mental state enables individuals to cope with stress, make sound decisions, and contribute meaningfully to their communities (World Health Organization, 2022). Despite its importance, mental health often receives less attention than physical health, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where public understanding remains limited and services are underdeveloped (Patel et al., 2018).

According to the Basic Health Research (Riskesdas), nearly 10% of Indonesians over age 15 suffer from emotional mental disorders, yet the majority do not seek professional help due to stigma, shame, or lack of awareness (Ministry of Health of Indonesia, 2018). These social barriers hinder early detection and treatment, contributing to the burden of untreated mental illness in the community.

Primary health centers (Puskesmas) play a vital role in addressing this gap by integrating mental health services into basic care and community health programs. As a first-level facility, the Kedurus Public Health Center in Surabaya is responsible for detecting local health concerns—including mental health—through

tools such as the Survei Mawas Diri (SMD) or Self-Awareness Survey (Ministry of Health of Indonesia, 2019). However, for such efforts to be effective, it is essential to understand the current level of mental health literacy among the population served.

This study explores the community's knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions regarding mental health and mental disorders in the working area of Puskesmas Kedurus. Using a descriptive quantitative design, the research aims to identify how well people recognize early symptoms of mental illness, how they view individuals experiencing such conditions, and whether they consider mental health an integral part of daily life. Research shows that low mental health literacy is linked to reduced help-seeking behavior, greater stigma, and poorer mental health outcomes (Wei et al., 2015).

The results of this study are expected to provide evidence-based insights for developing targeted education programs and stigma-reduction strategies. By engaging community members, health workers, and local leaders, Puskesmas can foster a more informed, inclusive, and supportive environment for those affected by mental illness (Kermode et al., 2009). Improving mental health literacy at the grassroots level is not only crucial for prevention and early intervention but also for achieving broader public health goals in Surabaya and similar communities.

## Methodology

To obtain a comprehensive overview of community perceptions regarding mental health and mental disorders within the working area of Kedurus Public Health Center (Puskesmas Kedurus), a descriptive study design was employed. This design was selected for its ability to provide objective information on current field conditions without manipulating the variables under investigation. The descriptive approach aimed to gather data on the status or characteristics of specific variables, including

symptoms and naturally occurring phenomena at the time of data collection.

The study population consisted of individuals who visited three primary healthcare facilities under the jurisdiction of Puskesmas Kedurus, namely: Kedurus Health Center, Warugunung Auxiliary Health Center, and Kebraon Auxiliary Health Center in Surabaya. Inclusion criteria included individuals aged 17 to 60 years, literate, and willing to participate voluntarily in the study. Respondents were selected using a convenience sampling technique, based on their availability and willingness at the time of their visit.

Data collection was conducted in April 2025 using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire designed to assess participants' knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions concerning mental health and mental disorders. The questionnaire was distributed directly by the research team to eligible visitors after they received a brief explanation regarding the study's purpose and procedures.

The collected data were subsequently analyzed using a qualitative thematic approach with the assistance of NVivo software. The analysis aimed to identify perceptual patterns and emerging thematic categories from the participants' responses, thereby generating deeper insight into public attitudes toward mental health. The findings of this analysis are expected to contribute to the development of more targeted and effective mental health promotion strategies at the primary healthcare level

## Result

**Table 1.** Characteristics of respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>		
17-25	16	26.7%
26-45	20	33.3%
46-65	15	25%
>65	9	15%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	12	20%
Female	48	80%

Based on the analysis of SMD data, the 5 most common problems were: The public lacks

recognition of the early symptoms of mental disorders, the public is unaware of the importance of mental health and still holds a stigma against mental disorders, the public lacks education about the importance of mental health in everyday life, people often experience mild anxiety but do not seek professional help, and the public does not know how to manage stress effectively.

**Table 2. Introspective Survey**

Question 1. Do you often feel anxious or worried excessively for no apparent reason?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Always	1	1.7%
Often	4	6.7%
Sometimes	27	45%
Never	28	46.7%
Question 2. Do you experience extreme mood swings?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Often	3	5.1%
Sometimes	26	44.1%
Never	31	50.8%
Question 3. Have you ever had thoughts of self-harm or felt that life is meaningless?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Often	2	3.4%
Sometimes	4	6.8%
Never	54	89.8%
Question 4. Have you ever heard voices or seen things that others cannot hear or see?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	6.7%
No	56	93.3%
Question 5. Do you feel that your thoughts are being controlled or read by others?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	6.7%
No	56	93.3%
Question 6. Do you feel that certain people or groups are watching or trying to harm you without reason?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	7	11.7%
No	53	88.3%
Question 7. Do you believe that mental health is just as important as physical health?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	98.3%
No	1	1.7%
Question 8. Do you agree that mental illness can happen to anyone?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	96.7%
No	2	3.3%
Question 9. Do you think mental illness can be treated with medical help and medication?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	93.3%
No	4	6.7%
Question 10. Do you believe mental illness is hereditary?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	23	38.3%
No	37	61.7%
Question 11. How would you feel if your friend/family/neighbor had a mental illness?		
Response	Frequency	Percent

Sympathetic & Supportive	43	71.7%
Afraid	7	11.7%
Indifferent	10	16.7%
Question 12. Have you ever received mental health education from a health worker?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	12	20%
No	48	80%
Question 13. Where do you usually get information about mental health?		
Source	Frequency	Percent
Internet/Social Media	45	75%
Television	18	30%
Health Workers	12	20%
School/Community	9	15%
Question 14. Would you like to receive more mental health education?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	93.3%
No	4	6.7%
Question 15. If there was a mental health program at Puskesmas Kedurus, would you join it?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	56	93.3%
No	4	6.7%
Question 16. Have you ever felt prolonged stress/anxiety/sadness?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	38	63.3%
No	22	36.7%
Question 17. Do you know how to manage stress or relaxation techniques?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	31.7%
No	41	68.3%
Question 18. If experiencing severe anxiety or stress, would you seek professional help?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	51	85%
No	9	15%
Question 19. Do you know that Puskesmas Kedurus provides mental health consultation services?		
Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	23.3%
No	46	76.7%

Based on the survey, five issues were identified in the Kedurus Community Health Center area. We prioritized these issues using USG method. We agreed that the community's lack of recognition of early symptoms of mental illness was the priority issue, based on the analysis of the Self-Awareness Survey (SMD) data, which will then be used to develop a Follow-Up Action Plan (RTL).

## Discussion

Mental health issue has become a trend nowadays, especially among those youngster. Based on WHO's report, one among four people in the world apparently will develop a mental or neurological disorder in some point throughout their life. Mental disorder can be defined as a health condition that affects people on how they think, feel, act, and interact with the others. This disorder can range from mild to severe that require appropriate treatment and management. And at some point, this can affect one's daily activity and quality of life. Our research gives a

new perspective about how Indonesian think or feel about mental health.

This study highlights significant mental health challenges and gaps in public awareness in the Kedurus Community Health Center's area. While the majority of respondents (98.3%) acknowledged that mental health is as important as physical health, the data reveal persistent stigma, limited knowledge, and under-utilization of mental health resources in the community.

One of the most striking findings is the disconnect between self-reported psychological symptoms and help-seeking behavior. For instance, 63.3% of respondents experienced prolonged stress, anxiety, or sadness, and 45% reported sometimes feeling excessive anxiety. Despite this, only 31.7% of participants stated they knew how to manage stress or apply relaxation techniques. Furthermore, while 85% indicated they would seek professional help if experiencing severe anxiety or stress, this figure still leaves a considerable 15% who would not, suggesting potential stigma, lack of access, or distrust in mental health services.

A notable concern is the low rate of mental health education from healthcare professionals—only 20% of respondents had ever received such education from a health worker. In contrast, 75% of respondents cited the internet and social media as their primary sources of mental health information. While this may reflect the increasing digital literacy of the population, it also raises concerns about the quality and accuracy of mental health information being consumed. This reliance on unverified sources may contribute to misconceptions, stigma, and reluctance to seek professional help.

Social perceptions of mental illness, although improving, remain problematic. While the majority (71.7%) would respond sympathetically and supportively toward individuals with mental illness, a non-negligible proportion still reported feelings of fear (11.7%) or indifference (16.7%). These attitudes can further isolate affected

individuals and discourage them from disclosing their struggles or seeking treatment. Additionally, only 38.3% of respondents believed mental illness to be hereditary, reflecting ongoing confusion or misinformation about its causes.

The survey also revealed that knowledge of existing local mental health services is extremely limited. Only 23.3% of participants knew that Puskesmas Kedurus offers mental health consultation services, pointing to an urgent need for improved communication and outreach. This lack of awareness may partially explain why psychological symptoms often go unreported or untreated.

Another critical finding is the public's limited recognition of severe psychiatric symptoms. For example, 6.7% of respondents reported experiencing hallucinations, and an equal percentage reported feeling that their thoughts were controlled or read by others—symptoms suggestive of possible psychosis. However, without adequate mental health literacy, individuals experiencing such symptoms may not realize they warrant professional evaluation and treatment. Early intervention in such cases is crucial, as delayed treatment is associated with worse prognoses in many psychiatric disorders.

On a positive note, the overwhelming majority of respondents expressed a willingness to learn more about mental health (93.3%) and participate in programs at their local health center (93.3%). This presents a unique opportunity for community health stakeholders. The strong interest indicates that, despite stigma and misinformation, there is substantial openness to education and engagement. Community-based interventions, mental health workshops, and school or workplace programs could be effective platforms for increasing literacy and decreasing stigma.

The prioritization of the lack of recognition of early symptoms as the main issue, as determined by the USG method, aligns with these findings. Early identification is a cornerstone of effective

mental health care, and its absence contributes to delayed diagnosis and treatment, chronic illness progression, and increased personal and societal burden.

In summary, this study emphasizes the urgent need to bridge the gap between mental health awareness and actionable knowledge. The Kedurus Community Health Center, as a primary healthcare provider, plays a pivotal role in achieving this goal. Mental health services must not only be available but also visible, accessible, and destigmatized. Integrating mental health education into routine community services, increasing the involvement of health workers in mental health promotion, and harnessing the power of digital platforms for accurate information dissemination are essential steps forward. Long-term progress requires sustained collaboration between health professionals, educators, policy-makers, and the community at large to foster a supportive environment for mental well-being

## Conclusion

As a first-level healthcare facility in Surabaya, the Kedurus Community Health Center is responsible for improving the health of the community within its jurisdiction, including through the Self-Awareness Survey (SMD) aimed at identifying health problems. The lack of public understanding of the early symptoms of mental disorders and the persistent stigma surrounding mental disorders are key issues. Mental health is a crucial aspect of a person's life, encompassing the ability to manage emotions, build social relationships, and cope with life's stresses in a healthy manner. Therefore, collaborative efforts between individuals, families, communities, and the government are needed to improve mental health literacy, eliminate stigma, and create an environment conducive to recovery and mental well-being, in order to achieve a more inclusive, healthy, and mentally prosperous society

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