

SHORT ARTICLE

Why Do Some People Still Fail to Utilize Affordable Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Screening Service? - A Qualitative Study Among White Collar Workers in Depok, West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

Background: Indonesia Basic Health Research (IBHR) 2013 results show that Depok citizens were at risk of non-communicable diseases (NCDs). However, participation on NCDs screening test among white collar workers was still 46.4%. **Aim & Objective:** The aim of this study is to explore barriers and challenges in accessing and implementing NCDs screening service at City Hall Depok. **Methods and Material:** This research used qualitative method. The data were collected through focus group discussion, in-depth interview, and document review. **Results:** The knowledge of informants about NCDs and NCDs screening needs improvement. The barriers for participating in NCDs screening were: tight work schedule, lack of information about NCDs screening programs, long queue, fear of an existing disease, and attention to the privacy of participants. **Conclusions:** Policy support and cooperation both across programs and sectors will be needed for future improvement. Education concerning NCDs and NCDs screening must be improved to engage utilization.

Keywords

NCDs; Screening Utilization; Health Screening; Worker's Health

Introduction

In Indonesia 71% of total deaths are caused by NCDs. (1) The Indonesian Basic Health Research (IBHR) 2013 (2) shows Depok, one of the suburban cities in West Java, Indonesia, has a high-risk factor for and prevalence of NCDs. Prevention and control of NCDs are emphasized in the early detection of risk factors. (3,4).

However, the awareness is low in both developed and developing countries (5,6,7,8). Furthermore, it requires payment fee as well as limited access. Thus,

Depok government initiated to provide free NCDs screening service at work place in 2016. However, the participation rate was only 46.4%.

Aims & Objectives

To explore barriers and challenges in accessing and implementing NCDs screening service at City Hall Depok.

Material & Methods

This research is a qualitative study using the Rapid Assessment Procedure (RAP) design at Depok City

Hall, which was implemented from April to June of 2018. Data were collected by focus group discussion (FGD), in-depth interview, and document review. The FGD was conducted for 40 informants consisting of two groups who had participated in the NCDs screening and two groups who had never previously participated. In-depth interviews were conducted for five informants from Depok Health Office who were responsible for the implementation of the NCDs screening program at Depok City Hall. Furthermore, the document review was completed to strengthen the validity and compare the information obtained from FGD and in-depth interviews.

Results

This innovative program by the Depok City Health Department aimed primarily to raise awareness in Depok City Hall white collar workers who possessed considerable risk factors for NCDs. The activity was executed by visiting all Local Government Work Departments (SKPD) based on the schedule which had previously been notified. Then, the screening test was conducted in each SKPD with the target of 100% coverage. However, in both 2017 and 2018, NCDs screening operations were not conducted due to budget constraints.

Utilizing the service of NCDs screening by white collar workers at Depok City Hall

Based on the document review, the participation of white-collar workers in NCDs screening was recorded at only 46.4%. The details of the document review results are indicated that quite a number of workers in Depok city hall suffer NCDs such as: hypertension (32.4%) and anaemia (11.1%) and many of them also have risk factor for NCDs as like: cholesterol above normal (68.4%), obesity (55.9%), and blood glucose level above normal (5.4%).

Based on that data, we can observe that all workers who participated in NCDs screening were considered to possess risk factors for NCDs. Based on FGD results, their reason for participating in the screening of NCDs was due to their desire to obtain knowledge concerning their current health conditions and prevent NCDs in the future. Another reason that influenced them to participate in the screening was that the service was free of charge.

"...luckily it is free, because I have ever checked myself at the clinic or pharmacy and it is quite expensive, so as long as it's free I decide to participate" (FGD-A2-3)

Informants' knowledge about NCDs and NCDs screening

Informants' knowledge concerning NCDs and NCDs screening was quite varied. Most informants were able to answer questions related to NCDs and NCDs screening, although the answers given were incomplete. Meanwhile, some informants provided incorrect answers related to NCDs, and there were also informants who had no knowledge of the NCDs screening program.

Attitudes and behaviours of health officers during NCDs screening service

All informants assessed positive attitudes and behaviours within the screening staff; they were friendly, able to communicate efficiently, and skilled in providing service. The staff members were also considered capable of providing solutions and advice relating to the screening or condition of the patient. However, their solutions and advice were only delivered orally, which sometimes made it difficult for patients to remember these suggestions.

"...their communication was good...he explained everything, such as how the results are and what to do after and I was also informed about the prohibitions" (FGD-A1-4)

Individual perception about NCDs and NCDs screening

Almost all informants agree that NCDs is a frightening disease because it can be potentially fatal. This reflects on the occurrence of NCDs regarding family members or colleagues; most informants felt at risk of exposure to NCDs due to a history of NCDs in their ancestry that made them assume they would be more prone to contracting NCDs. Informants also expressed their concerns about being exposed to NCDs because of the risky natural behaviour of NCDs. Thus, all informants believed NCDs were a health threat after learning their true vulnerability and seriousness. However, their perceptions of threat did not effectively influence them to join the NCDs screening process.

According to informants, the advantage of completing the NCDs screening was to find out their current health conditions in order to properly maintain healthy lifestyles and avoid NCDs risk factors. The barriers for joining NCDs screening were: 1) tight work schedule, 2) lack of information about the NCDs screening program, 3) long queue, 4) fear of an existing disease, and 5) attention to the privacy of participants.

Social support following NCDs screening

Some informants stated that support from friends and spouses strengthened their interest in participating, including some informants who initially were quite hesitant to participate; many of these individuals eventually decided to participate in the NCDs screening. According to some informants, dictated requirement from their leader(s) to participate in NCDs screening activity was quite influential, especially when in the form of a Letter of Assignment (LOA). Nearly all informants agreed to follow NCDs screening if there was a LOA present.

Policy and organizing NCDs screening activities

The NCDs screening program at Depok City Hall was held due to concern about the threat of NCDs, whose high prevalence was demonstrated in Depok based on the IBHR results in 2013; another reason for screening included the long-life expectancy in Depok, which was 74.01 years. For these reasons, if people suffered from NCDs, Depok would be burdened. NCDs screening in 2016, however, was conducted without any policies. Because the organization of NCDs screening activities was not maximized, there was no special team with details of clear duties and responsibilities, nor was there a standard operating procedure (SOP).

Conclusion

The privacy concern is a barrier for informants that contribute to their hesitation toward participating in NCDs screening. However, research on this subject has not been thoroughly conducted. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further research regarding the significance of privacy issues related to the utilization of NCDs screening.

Recommendation

NCDs screening is important for public health due to its effectiveness to reduce the burden of NCDs. Hence, Indonesia public health program should not only provide the screening service but also develop activities aiming to raise awareness among people for doing regular screening test.

Limitation of the study

This method limitation was recall bias since informants should remember their experience two years ago on utilizing NCDs screening service at their workplace. However, we did triangulation data by comparing their information with several supporting documents, such as: medical records, technical report of program, etc.

Relevance of the study

This study has revealed that sustainability of public health program depends on policy and budget support. In addition, providing a health screening services will not optimize if it is not followed by health education. By delivering health education, people will increase their awareness and knowledge on health risky behaviours and NCDs which encourage them to utilize the screening services.

Authors Contribution

All authors have contributed equally in the manuscript.

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