



Protecting the Future:

Enriching reflections on the Covid-19 pandemic from Interdisciplinary Research

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 spreads sporadically throughout the world at a high mortality rate. This virus caused a health crisis that forced the World Health Organization to declare it a global pandemic and caused various countries to implement massive social restrictions. Until March 2023, there were 160,963 deaths because of Covid-19, making Indonesia the second highest in Asia. Indonesia's lousy experience managing the Covid-19 pandemic should raise awareness that a crisis can occur at any time. Even though the current situation has improved a lot, preparedness and vigilance should not be neglected. No one can guarantee that a pandemic like Covid-19 will not occur again. Based on this situation, it is essential to look more deeply at the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and how scholars in various disciplines deal with it. To analyze future risks, interdisciplinary research is needed. This is a research approach that can link the main issues of the medical and health disciplines with other disciplines, such as the environment, social welfare, and public policy.

Keywords: *Future, Covid-19 Pandemic, Interdisciplinary Research.*

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1. Remembering the Beginning

It has been four years since humans have lived together with the Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19). The virus that first appeared in Wuhan, People's Republic of China, spread sporadically throughout the world and transformed the face of human civilization. The high mortality rate has gripped the world in extreme fear in the fight against this virus. Instantly, Covid-19 caused a health crisis and other multidimensional crises, forcing the World Health Organization to designate it as a global pandemic in March 2020 (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). Consequently, Covid-19 quickly became a prominent topic on various media platforms, beginning with scientific conversations and progressing to mysticism, hoaxes, and conspiracy theories.

The uncontrolled spread of Covid-19 forced various countries to implement massive social restrictions, including Indonesia (Djalante et al., 2020). Community existence was altered when many regulations were implemented, such as disallowing gatherings, maintaining a distance when interacting, routinely washing hands, wearing facemasks in communal settings, taking hand sanitizer everywhere, and working remotely. Initially, these rules were straightforward to follow. Despite this, many people still disregard these regulations, believing they impinge upon their personal freedoms. This regulation is created to prevent the further spread of Covid-19 and ensure proper treatment for those who have contracted the virus.

Insufficient awareness regarding the imposed social restrictions and health measures has led to the extensive transmission of Covid-19. When the pandemic began, the death rate rose significantly because of a few factors, including patients refusing medical help due to the dishonor associated with Covid-19, the public's lack of knowledge on oxygen saturation, and the Indonesian health system not being adequately prepared for a crisis. Until March 2023, it was recorded that confirmed cases in Indonesia reached 6,740,404, with details of 6,575,775 recovered and 160,963 died (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2023). This statistic places the mortality rate of Covid-19 in Indonesia second in Asia.

2. From Experience to Vigilance

The bad experience of Indonesia in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic should serve as a warning to all stakeholders that a health emergency can occur. The responsibility is not just with the government, but with all of society. Although the world's condition has advanced considerably since this editorial was written, and many countries have decided that Covid-19 is no longer a pandemic, but rather has become an endemic situation, like the common flu (Aljazeera, 2022), it is still important to stay watchful and to be prepared. It is not possible to guarantee that a pandemic similar to Covid-19 will not reoccur in the future. It ought to be acknowledged that Covid-19 has changed into various variants, including Alpha, Beta, Delta, Gamma, and Omicron.

In principle, Covid-19 can end if there is no more transmission, even though the virus continues to mutate. Various sources stated that most dead victims had not received vaccinations, were over sixty, or had comorbidities. However, it is essential to remember that the Omicron variant of Covid-19 can still be transmitted even to people who have been vaccinated. Early preventative measures like vaccinations are essential for controlling the Omicron variant (Ren et al., 2022). Despite the double vaccinations, the body is still vulnerable to developing immunity; however, relying solely on defensive immunity is inadequate to improve the case. Herd immunity is necessary to increase protection in the community.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not a transitory occurrence, nor can it be expected to bring about a swift return to normality. In the 21st century, there has not been an event whose scale and impact on human life are comparable to the impact of Covid-19. We must learn from past pandemics, including the 1918-1920 Spanish influenza (Martini et al., 2019). Unfortunately, the attitude of certain Indonesian people during the Covid-19 pandemic was still similar to that of the Spanish influenza period. Even though the period is 102 years, more than a century and the socio-economic conditions must have been very different. People who demonstrate a fatalistic attitude and seem to underestimate the magnitude of the global crisis cannot be justified and are detrimental to the public.

3. Interdisciplinary Research Urgency

The world is transitioning to a period of almost unrestricted utilization of technology. This changeover has provided certain advantages, such as more convenience to life, and created risks, such as technological threats. For example, even though there have been many studies that have concluded that Covid-19 is caused by the transfer of viruses from animals to humans (Shereen, 2020), we cannot deny that rumors have spread that Covid-19 is a product of laboratory failure. This issue is rapidly disseminated through social media and accepted by certain social circles. Humans live in a time full of risks, regardless of the morality of the situation. These risks usually remain unseen and unrecognized by the general population until they become major issues and have a pronounced impact.

Risk society is not a recent phenomenon. At least two scientists have popularized this term. A German scientist theorized this term Ulrich Beck (1992), through his work entitled *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. British scientist Anthony Giddens again theorized the term (1999) through his work entitled *Risk and Responsibility*. The two scientists noted that society's social, spatial, and structural aspects remain in flux. For this reason, researchers must thoroughly investigate and re-examine social, ecological, and epidemiological susceptibilities and risks that could potentially arise.

Despite the current containment of Covid-19, vigilance must still be maintained for the potential of new outbreaks in the future during a pandemic.

To fully comprehend the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the potential ecological risks of further outbreaks, and how experts from multiple fields address the issue, interdisciplinary research is required. A single approach cannot resolve the current pandemic (Zhao et al., 2022). The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance of research in health management, public health, and health services. Although research is necessary to connect medical and health issues to those from other disciplines, such as the environment, social welfare, and public policy, managing a pandemic will impact environmental resources, government policy, and the wider community.

GHMJ (Global Health Management Journal) is established to respond to this need. As a journal that concentrates on the health sphere, with a wide range of topics such as the environment, occupational safety, economics, technology, and bettering the quality of life, GHMJ has been deemed an interdisciplinary journal that offers numerous solutions to intersectoral issues. The author believes GHMJ has very high prospects as a reputable journal. Hence, it is a great privilege for the author who has been trusted to compose a guest editorial for this edition. Lastly, the authors would like to express their highest gratitude and appreciation for the trust and opportunity of the Indonesian Scholars' Alliance. This edition of GHMJ will supply various perspectives that enhance the understanding of the Covid-19 pandemic to safeguard human life in the coming years. Happy reading!

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest. Nothing to disclosure.

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