



Anxiety in prisoners who are currently serving a prison term: A descriptive study in a class IIA women's prison in Semarang

Maria Yoanita Bina^{1*}; Megah Andriany²; Nur Setiawati Dewi³

^{1,2,3}Universitas Diponegoro Semarang

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ABSTRACT

Detention can cause problems and stressors for prisoners such as anxiety. Anxiety in female prisoners has an impact on psychological and emotional stress that causes violence in prisons. However, research related to anxiety in female prisoners is still limited to anxiety before going home. Therefore, researchers are interested in researching to determine the level of anxiety in prisoners who are serving a period of detention. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of anxiety in female prisoners who are serving a period of detention. The research design used in this study was a critical study to see a picture of the anxiety level of female prisoners. The sample in this study was 128 people who were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The results showed that the highest prisoners' anxiety level was in the moderate category as much as 44.5 percent and the lowest was in the panic category as much as 5.5 percent. Female prisoner anxiety arises because of negative emotions due to problems faced, stressors, feelings of failure, and feelings of insecurity. Most of the anxiety levels of female prisoners in prison are in the medium category. Therefore, nurses need to develop research related to interventions to overcome the anxiety of female prisoners in prison.

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Kecemasan pada Warga Binaan Pemasyarakatan yang sedang menjalani masa tahanan: Studi deskriptif di lapas perempuan kelas IIA Semarang

ABSTRAK

Penahanan dapat menimbulkan masalah dan stressor bagi warga binaan pemasyarakatan (WBP) seperti kecemasan. Kecemasan pada WBP perempuan berdampak pada tekanan psikis dan emosional yang menimbulkan kekerasan dalam lapas. Namun, penelitian terkait kecemasan pada WBP perempuan masih terbatas pada kecemasan menjelang pulang. Oleh karena itu, peneliti tertarik untuk melakukan penelitian untuk mengetahui tingkat kecemasan pada WBP yang sedang menjalani masa tahanan. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui tingkat kecemasan pada WBP perempuan yang sedang menjalani masa tahanan. Desain penelitian yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif untuk melihat gambaran tingkatan kecemasan WBP perempuan. Sampel dalam penelitian ini sebesar 128 orang yang dipilih dengan menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tingkat kecemasan WBP tertinggi berada pada kategori sedang sebanyak 44.5% dan terendah berada pada kategori panik sebanyak 5.5%. Kecemasan WBP perempuan muncul karena adanya emosi negatif karena adanya permasalahan yang dihadapi, adanya stressor, merasakan kegagalan, dan adanya perasaan tidak aman. Tingkat kecemasan WBP perempuan di Lapas sebagian besar berada pada kategori sedang. Oleh Karena itu, perawat perlu

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*) corresponding author

Departemen Ilmu Keperawatan Universitas
Diponegoro Semarang
Jl.Prof. Soedarto, SH, Tembalang,
Semarang/telp./fax: (024) 76408919/ (024)
76486849

Email: ns.yoanitabina@gmail.com

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mengembangkan riset terkait intervensi untuk mengatasi kecemasan WBP perempuan di Lapas.

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Introduction

Detention can cause problems and stressors for prisoners such as mental pressure, trauma, tendencies to self-isolate, social deviation, suspicion, and anxiety (Kartono, 2014). The results of research in several countries show the high incidence of mental disorders in prisons (Arnau-Peiró et al., 2012; Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2014; Hassiotis et al., 2011; Kingston, Le Mesurier, Yorston, Wardle, & Heath, 2011; Kumar et al., 2014). Female prisoners' mental health status is mostly bad as much as 55% (Geitona & Milioni, 2016). Besides, 41% of female prisoners have severe mental disorders (Al-Rousan, Rubenstein, Sieleni, Deol, & Wallace, 2017). The problem of mental disorders that often occur in female assisted residents is anxiety.

The results showed that female prisoners' anxiety level who experienced severe anxiety was 38% (Utari, Fitria, & Rafiyah, 2012). Other studies also show that 53.83% of female prisoners experience moderate anxiety (Mandira, Marjohan, & Fernandes, 2019). Besides, the anxiety rate for female prisoners is greater (21.3%) compared to male prisoners (6.6%) (van den Brink, Harte, & Denzel, 2018). The high rate of anxiety is often associated with several factors.

Anxiety in female prisoners is influenced by the ability to adjust to a new place (Crewe, 2009; Værøy, 2011), family support and social support from WBP (Salim, Komariah, & Fitria, 2016), and personal relationships with family (Paul Swift, Eva Cyhlarova & O'Sullivan, 2014). Besides, women in prison have a great chance of experiencing economic difficulties and most of them are caring for their children alone, causing conflicts such as anxiety (Ferszt, Miller, Hickey, Maull, & Crisp, 2015). Anxiety has an adverse impact on female prisoners.

Anxiety in female prisoners has an impact on psychological and emotional stress that causes violence in prisons in the form of physical and sexual violence such as beatings, slaps, and being threatened with weapons (Bensimon, Einat, & Gilboa, 2015; Eleanor Taylor-Nicholson & Barry Krisberg, 2013). However, research related to anxiety in female prisoners is still limited to anxiety before going home (Salim et al., 2016; Utari et al., 2012) and mental disorders and has not been specific to female prisoners (Andreoli et al., 2014; Badru, Ogunlesi, Ogunwale, Abdulmalik, & Yusuf, 2018; Dadi, Dachew, Kisi, Yigzaw, & Azale, 2016; Malik, Singh, Beniwal, & Kumar, 2019). Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a study to determine the level of anxiety in prisoners who are serving a prison term, so the aim of this study is to determine the level of anxiety in female prisoners who are currently serving a prison term.

Method

The research design used in this study was a critical study to see a picture of female prisoners' anxiety level. This research was conducted at the Class IIA Women's Prison in Semarang. The population of female prisoners in this study was 302 people. The sample in this study was 128 people selected using a purposive sampling technique with inclusion criteria aged 25-55 years and a prison term of more than 1 year and exclusion criteria for female prisoners who were in isolation cells and who suffered from chronic disease.

Data were collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire for the respondents' characteristics consisted of age, education, marital status, and period of imprisonment. The anxiety questionnaire uses Spielberger's The State Anxiety Inventory (STAI) which consists of 20 statement items (Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg, & Jacobs, 1983). The State anxiety scale is designed to be sensitive to the situation when the measurement is made, the score on this scale can be influenced by the emotional state that is generally felt (Johnson & Spielberger, 1968). The STAI questionnaire's validity and reliability were tested at the Class IIA Women's Prison in Semarang. Respondents who have been used to test the validity and reliability will not be used again in this study. The results of the validity test on 30 respondents showed rcount of 0.430-0.790 and the reliability test showed Cronbach's alpha of 0.892. Data analysis in this study used univariate analysis in the form of frequency and distribution to describe the level of anxiety of female prisoners.

Results and Discussion

The results showed that most female prisoners were in early adulthood amounting to 66.4% (Table 1). The highest education level of female prisoners was Senior High School as much as 49.2% and the lowest is not in school as much as 1.6% (Table 1). The highest female prisoner status was married 48.4% and the lowest was single 22.7% (Table 1). The highest prison term for female prisoners was 1-5 years as much as 42.3% and the lowest in over 5 years as much as 10.95% (Table 1).

All humans can experience anxiety at various age levels. However, anxiety is more common in adulthood. The results showed that most of the respondents were in early adulthood. Medley argues that early adulthood is in the age range of 22-34 years (Medley, 1980). Early adulthood is a time when a person adapts to a new style of life and new community expectations so that prisoners in early adulthood

need the ability to be able to adapt to the various changes that occur. Changes that occur in early adulthood include work by engaging in adult duties to confirm identity, marriage or partnership in intimacy duties, and parenting to ensure the next generation's welfare (Srivastava, John, Gosling, & Potter, 2003). Female prisoners who cannot adapt to change will experience anxiety (Medley, 1980; Salim et al., 2016). The results showed that most prisoners experienced anxiety in early adulthood (Osasona & Koleoso, 2015., Harlianty, R., & Paramastri, I. 2020). Therefore, it can be concluded that female prisoners in early adulthood are prone to experience anxiety caused by changes in society's roles and demands.

Table 1
Characteristics of female prisoners in Class IIA Women's Prison in Semarang (n = 128)

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
Early adulthood	85	66.4
Late adulthood	43	33.6
Education level		
Uneducated	2	1.6
Elementary School	15	11.7
Junior High School	24	18.8
Senior High School	63	49.2
College	24	18.8
Marital Statues		
Unmarried	29	22.7
Married	62	48.4
Widow	37	28.9
Criminal period		
1-5 years	55	42.3
6-10 years	41	32
11-15 years	18	14.1
>15 years	14	10.95

The results showed that most female prisoners had senior high school education levels. The results of this study are supported by previous research which shows that most of the prisoners have senior high school education (58.8%) (Mandira et al., 2019). The education level of female prisoners will affect the level of their understanding so that it helps them to understand the information obtained and use it as an alternative problem solving so as to form an adaptive coping mechanism in overcoming various problems in prison such as anxiety, feelings of guilt and regret, disappointment with family attitudes, and feeling that life is not meaningful (Hayati, 2015; Mutoharoh, 2009; Putri, Ira, & Hilma, 2014). Therefore, female prisoners who have the elementary school education level have the opportunity to understand the use of a positive defense system to solve problems.

The results showed that most of the marital status of female prisoners was already married at 48.4% and 28.9% were widows. Marital status is one of the stressors for female prisoners due to limitations in maintaining family integrity, the role of mother in caring for children, and conflicts in marriage with husbands (Aini, 2015). In addition, most prisoners who are serving a period of detention carry out their role as sole caregivers so that they become stressors for female prisoners because they think about their children's future (Ferszt et al., 2015). Therefore, the risk of marital status creates anxiety for female prisoners.

The results showed that most female prisoners in prison have a prison term of 1-5 years. The results of research in the UK show that long incarceration with little mental stimulation contributes to deteriorating mental health and is a cause of anger, frustration, and anxiety (Martha & Annatagia, 2014; Nurse, Woodcock, & Ormsby, 2003). Mental health services in prisons are so limited that they cannot ensure the mental health of all prisoners. Therefore, female prisoners who have a long prison term are at risk of experiencing anxiety.

Table. 2

Anxiety Level of Female Prisoners in Class IIA Prison in Semarang (n = 128)

Anxiety Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Mild anxiety	36	28.1
Moderate anxiety	57	44.5
Sever anxiety	28	21.9
Panic	7	5.5

The results showed that the highest female prisoners' anxiety level was in the moderate category as much as 44.5% and the lowest was in the panic category as much as 5.5% (Table 1). Most of the female prisoners who served a period of detention had an anxiety level in the moderate anxiety category. Most of the female prisoners who were in prison had moderate levels of anxiety. The results of this study are supported by research conducted by Mandira which shows that female prisoners experience anxiety in the moderate category of 53.8% (Mandira et al., 2019). These results indicate that female prisoners are not only feeling anxiety before the time of release

Prison conditions play an important role in prisoners' anxiety because prisoners have to adapt to new places and roles (Værøy, 2011). Class IIA Women's Prison in Semarang has mandatory regulations and activities that must be followed so that WBP feels that their freedom is very limited. This is what makes it difficult for WBP to adapt. The prison environment has a deep and negative impact on the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of prisoners. Losing freedom, especially limitation in making decisions to carry out the role, causes feelings of frustration, anxiety, and stress. In addition, excess capacity creates female prisoners' problems because they cannot maintain their privacy and creates a situation that creates hostility (Bradford, 2006; Goomany & Dickinson, 2015).

The results showed that female prisoners' anxiety arises because of negative emotions due to problems faced, stressors, feelings of failure, and feelings of insecurity (Martha & Annatagia, 2014). This is in line with female prisoners' statement that the anxiety that is felt arises because of negative feelings caused by feelings of depression, insecurity, and feelings of distrust of oneself. The results showed that they experienced psychological pressure due to forced separation (Harner & Riley, 2013). Separation from children is a stressor because prisoners cannot confirm the condition and whereabouts of their children. This was also conveyed by the female prisoners at the Class IIA Women's Prison in Semarang that the inability to ensure the development and fulfillment of children's needs is one of the causes of feelings of anxiety. In addition, close supervision during visits causes the relationship between prisoners and their families and children to become obstructed (Goomany & Dickinson, 2015; Prison Reform Trust, 2019). Other studies have shown that access to information on the family by the telephone is sometimes difficult to do because of many

requests and long queues so that the relationship with the family is cut off causing feelings of fear, worry, and triggers anxiety (Harner & Riley, 2013; Nurse et al., 2003). The female prisoners said that the time for using telephones was very limited and sometimes the call was not answered by the family so that the prisoners could not get information related to the family, this triggered feelings of anxiety. However, mental health services in prisons are very limited.

The results of the literature review show that the flow of mental health services in prisons starts from screening, triage, assessment, intervention, and reintegration (Forrester, Till, Simpson, & Shaw, 2018). However, research results show that mental health services in prisons have not been carried out optimally (Birmingham, 2003). These results were supported by interviews with health workers in prisons who said that there was no special program related to mental

health in prisons so that the results of mental health screening carried out at prison were not followed up. In addition, follow-up on mental health problems can only be carried out if the prisoner arrives with a medical diagnosis that he has a mental disorder. Therefore, it is necessary to have a mental health service program in prisons including interventions to overcome prisoner anxiety.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Most of the anxiety levels of female prisoners are in the moderate category. Therefore, nurses need to develop research related to interventions to overcome the anxiety of female prisoners.

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