



## The Implementation of Youth Reproductive Health Services during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed and has an impact on all aspects, including adolescent reproductive health services. Adolescents face a variety of reproductive health risks that, if not addressed properly, can have long-term consequences. This review aims to determine the implementation of adolescent reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Scoping review employed databases such as PubMed, Proquest, Science Direct, and Wiley Online Library to adapt the Arksey and O'Malley frameworks. There were 8 articles out of 550 which were selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. The Mixed Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT) was used to evaluate the articles in this scoping review. The results of the review showed changes in reproductive health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. As for the obstacles experienced by adolescents in accessing reproductive health services before the pandemic, there were barriers that came from the individual itself, socio-culture and society, in this case it is necessary to carry out several strategies related to the provision of reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic both in terms of technology and changes in government regulations.

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### Kata kunci:

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### ABSTRAK

Pandemi Covid-19 telah mengubah dan berdampak pada segala aspek, salah satunya aspek pelayanan kesehatan reproduksi remaja. Usia remaja dihadapkan dengan berbagai macam risiko kesehatan reproduksi yang apabila tidak dikelola dengan baik akan mengakibatkan konsekuensi yang berkepanjangan. Review ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui implementasi pelayanan kesehatan reproduksi remaja selama masa pandemi Covid-19. Scoping review mengadaptasi framework Arksey dan O' Malley dengan menggunakan database yaitu *PubMed*, *Proquest*, *Science Direct*, dan *Wiley Online Library*. Didapatkan sebanyak 8 artikel dari 550 yang diseleksi berdasarkan kriteria inklusi dan eksklusi. Penilaian artikel dalam scoping review ini menggunakan *Mixed Method Appraisal Tool* (MMAT). Hasil review ditemukan terjadinya perubahan pelayanan kesehatan reproduksi dimasa pandemi covid-19. Adapun terkait dengan Hambatan yang dialami oleh remaja dalam mengakses layanan kesehatan reproduksi sebelum terjadinya pandemi yaitu hambatan yang berasal dari individu sendiri, sosial budaya dan masyarakat, maka dalam hal ini perlu dilakukan beberapa strategi terkait dengan pemberian pelayanan Kesehatan reproduksi selama masa pandemi Covid-19 baik dari segi teknologi dan perubahan peraturan pemerintah.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed and has an impact on all aspects of life, including social, cultural, and economic life, as well as access to health care systems, one of which is the reproductive health service system for adolescents. (Ullah et al., 2020). The results of the study showed that the impact of Covid-19 in health services was a change in service patterns, including changes in operating methods and hours, restrictions on the types of services available, and the temporary closure of most health services related to reproductive health (Heintzman et al., 2020).

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) emphasize the importance of improving adolescent health by providing affordable and acceptable sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents (WHO, 2016). Adolescents face a variety of health risks, one of which is reproductive health, which if not managed properly can have long-term consequences until the teenager reaches adulthood (Nurmala, 2020). However, there is still a lot of evidence showing that the utilization of health services by adolescents is very low (Kurniawati & Astuti, 2020). Contributing factors related to the low utilization of sexual and reproductive health services by adolescents include knowledge and perceptions, socio-cultural factors, poor access and poor quality of health services (Laili et al., 2019). In addition, shame, the availability of inflexible service hours, feelings of reluctance with health workers and the existence of non-youth-friendly services all contribute to this problem. (Matahari & Utami, 2017). This is also exacerbated by the

Covid-19 pandemic which causes restrictions in the provision of direct health services (Lindberg et al., 2020).

According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) report, the number of teenage marriages has increased during the pandemic, with 650 million teenagers worldwide marrying during the pandemic. (UNFPA–UNICEF, 2020). Furthermore, a study found an increase in poor reproductive health behaviors such as masturbation and pornography, sexting, and chatting with their partners via electronic media (Nelson et al., 2020), this is due to the Covid-19 pandemic which forced everyone to stay at home, and reduced socialization directly (Bianchi et al., 2021). As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, adolescent reproductive health issues are becoming increasingly complex. As a result, a study on the implementation of adolescent reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic is required.

## METHOD

The method used was scoping review. Scoping review is a systematic exploration method by mapping the available literature on a topic, discussions related to key concepts, theories and sources of evidence (Trico, et.al. 2016). This method was chosen because it allowed a broad, comprehensive and systematic exploration of the findings reported in the literature. The stages are:

**Table 1**  
**PEOS Framework**

Population	Exposure	Outcomes/Themes	Study Design
- Adolescent	- Adolescent reproductive	- Implementation	- Qualitative study
- Health works	health service during the Covid-19 pandemic		- Quantitative study
			- Mix Method

### Step 1: Identify Scoping Review Questions

The framework used in this review was Population, Exposure, Outcomes and Study Design (PEOS). The use of PEOS in the review would facilitate the identification of key concepts in the focus of the question, the development of appropriate search terms, and the determination of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The PEOS framework could be seen in table 1. This scoping review's questions focused on "How is the implementation of adolescent reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic?"

### Step 2: Identifying Articles Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The selection of articles in this study was determined through the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

**Table 2**  
**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
1. Articles published in Bahasa Indonesia	1. Opinion Papers
2. Published since 2019 to 2021	2. Short Revide
3. Articles that discuss access to health services for adolescents from the perspective of service providers and adolescents	3. Article Review
	4. Commentary

### Step 3: Identifying Relevant Studies

The search of relevant literature was done by using the PubMed, Proquest, Science Direct, and Wiley Online Library databases. Then the researchers made the search process keywords that were entered using Medical Subject Headings (MeSH): *Adolescen\* OR you\* OR teen\* AND Health Worker\*, Reproductive health Services\* OR Sexual and Reproductive health care services\*, Covid-19 OR Coronavirus OR Pandemic OR COVID19, Implement\* AND challenge\* OR Barrier\**.

### Step 4: Article Selection

The article data filtering process was carried out using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses). The screening procedure involved selecting duplicate articles from the database, selecting article titles, and reviewing articles by reading the full text. After being selected, 8 articles were found and used in this scoping review. The articles were then assessed for quality using the Mixed Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT). The article screening process is described in Figure 1 of the following PRISMA Flowchart (Figure 1).

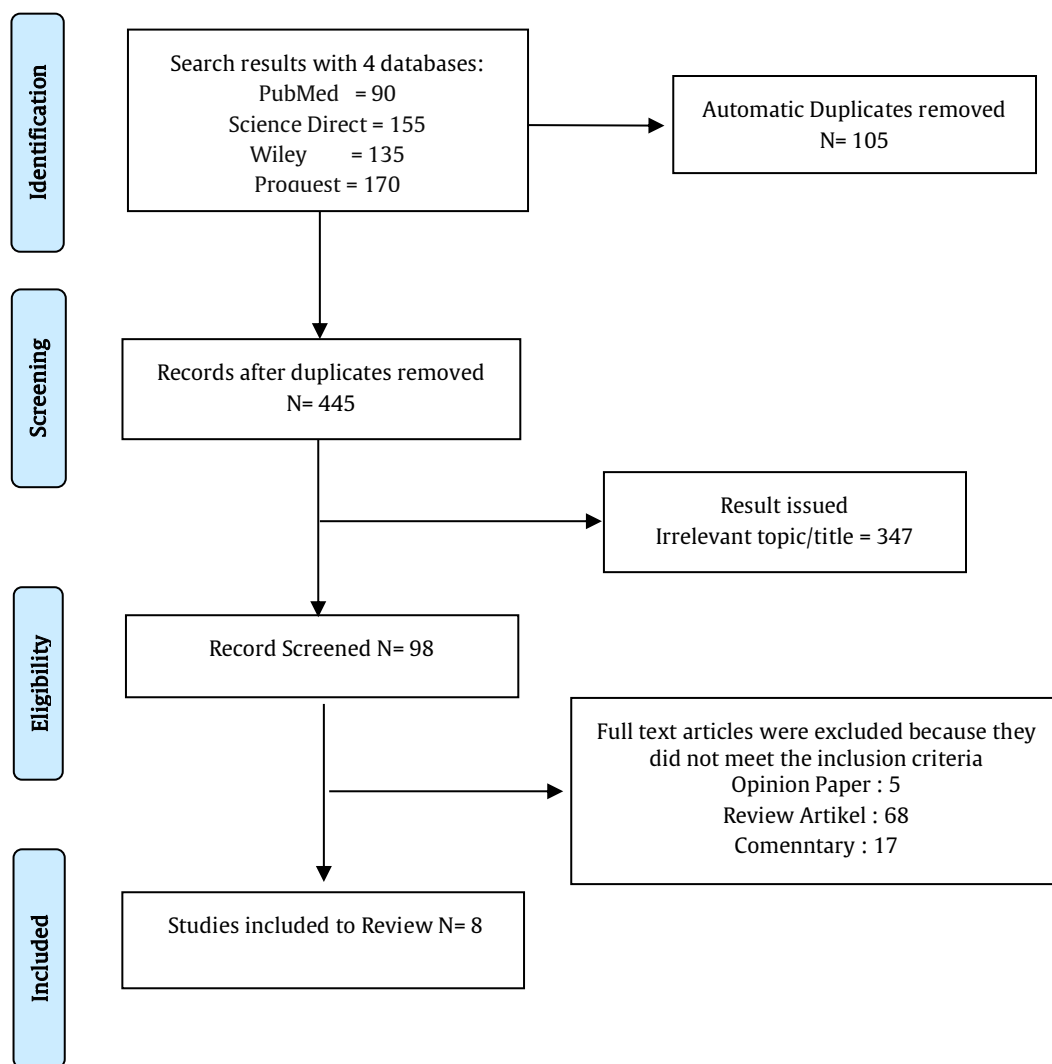


Figure. 1 Prisma Flow Diagram

## Step 5: Synthesis of Evidence

### Data Charting

After mapping the articles on the Prisma Flowchart, 8 articles were then entered in a table for charting, which consisted of title/author/year/value, country, research objectives, methodology, research results and assessment.

## RESULTS

### Article Characteristics

The results of the 8 articles that have been reviewed using the MMAT tools showed that the articles were from both developing and developed countries. Two articles from Uganda, one from Iraq, and one from Nigeria, which were from developing countries. There were two articles from the United States, one from California, and one from New Zealand in the developed countries (Figure 2). Based on the method, it was found that 3 articles used quantitative studies, 2 articles used mixed-methods and 1 article used qualitative studies (Figure 3). The 8 selected articles were of good quality, with all of the articles receiving grade A (Figure 4).

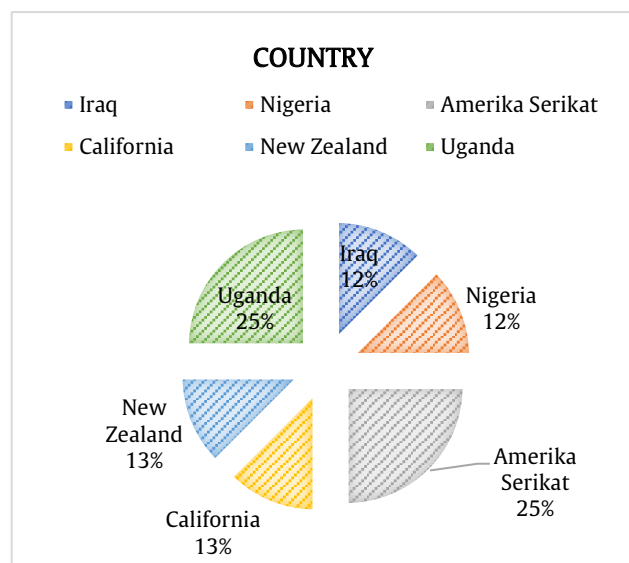


Figure 2. Country

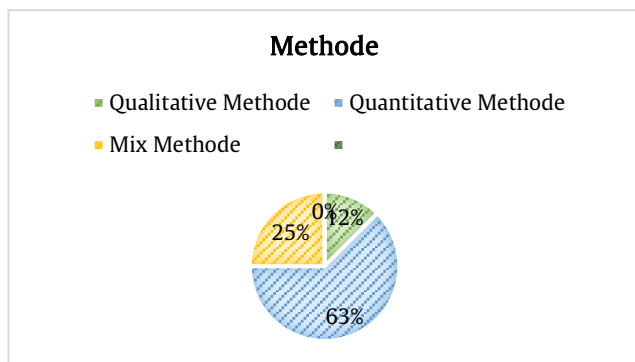


Figure 3. Method

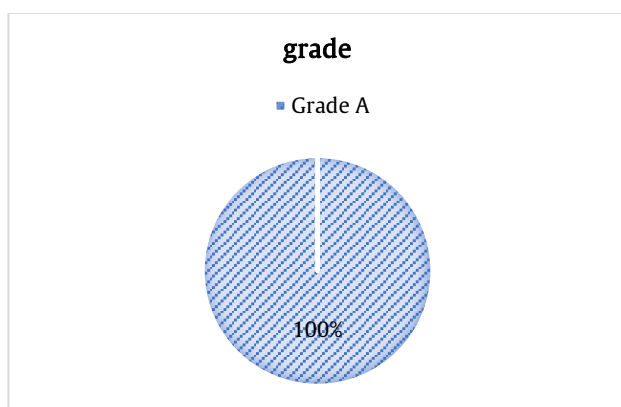


Figure 4. Grade

## Thematic Analysis

According to the review, researchers identified two main themes in this case: reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic and efforts to provide reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## DISCUSSION

### Health Services During the Covid-19 Pandemic

#### a. Changes in the Reproductive Health Service System

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on a variety of sectors, including government, education, the food sector, and health care. What is most concerning is the impact on the service system, which is used to provide services to the public (Tang et al., 2020). The results of the study stated that the occurrence of Covid-19 led to reduced access to sexual and reproductive health service facilities because some health facilities only provided services to Covid-19 patients (Adelekan et al., 2021). Reduced access to reproductive health services has been reported in a number of countries, both developing and developed. Countries that previously provided reproductive health services discontinued them after the pandemic made these services no longer a top priority, particularly in developing countries (Endler et al., 2021). In contrast to developed countries, reproductive health services are still carried out using telehealth services (Steiner et al., 2021).

The temporary cessation of reproductive health services has caused various problems that have a direct impact on adolescents and women in general (Tang et al., 2020). Reproductive health problems among adolescents are often forgotten at any time of humanitarian crisis, with undesirable short-term and long-term implications (Jennings et al., 2019). Problems related to reproductive health such as increased sexual exploitation activities, sexual and gender-based violence, increased rates of early marriage, teenage pregnancy that can have long-term consequences for adolescents' lives (Murewanhema, 2020).

#### b. Barriers to access to reproductive health services

Barriers experienced by adolescents in accessing reproductive health services before the pandemic occurred were obstacles that came from the individual himself, socio-cultural and community (Nmadu et al., 2020). Barriers that came from individuals, one of which came from the lack of knowledge of adolescents causing reduced access of adolescents related to sexual and reproductive health services (Thongmixay et al., 2019). Another factor that became an obstacle for adolescents in accessing reproductive health services was socio-culture (Abuosi & Anaba, 2019). The religious culture in society still did not allow to talk openly about sexuality, which negatively affected adolescents' decisions to use sexual and reproductive health services (Birhan et al., 2018). In addition, there was a public stigma that still thought badly of adolescents who accessed reproductive health services (Mutea et al., 2020).

Structural inequalities of services, social influences, experiences, confusing policies and unequal distribution of reproductive health services were also common obstacles experienced by the community or youth who would access them (Lokot & Avakyan, 2020). The implementation of reproductive health service policies was still lacking in some areas (Mutea et al., 2020). So that adolescents felt confused about how to access services related to their reproductive health (Shariati et al., 2014).

### Efforts to Provide Reproductive Health Services During the Covid-19 Pandemic

#### a. Technology Development

One of the innovations that can be done is through online consultation, either by telephone/video or message or what is known as telehealth/telemedicine which is connected directly to nurses, midwives and doctors who provide reproductive health services (Rose et al., 2021). During pandemic, digital technology can reduce or even solve many challenges, thereby improving public health. The use of telehealth or telemedicine is one of the innovative strategies that can be used in the provision of health services during the Covid-19 pandemic to reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread, both for people seeking services and for health workers providing services (Steiner et al., 2021).

#### b. Government Regulation Development

Reproductive health services must be prioritized and integrated into pandemic planning and preparation. Government policies must be firm and explicit in protecting a variety of reproductive health services, which can be accomplished in this case by expanding health insurance, eliminating discriminatory policies, allocating funding, and adjusting reproductive health services during the Covid-19

pandemic. (Maier et al., 2021). The government can strengthen strategies, revise and develop clear health service protocols and policies, one of which is about reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic (Adelekan et al., 2021). A study recommended revising or changing the provision of outpatient abortion care, increasing gestational age, increasing sexual and reproductive education in schools, and providing contraceptive services, as well as reproductive health services that can be delivered via telemedicine (Endler et al., 2021).

#### LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This scoping review used 4 databases that have previously been determined in the article search method which aimed to find out related to the condition of adolescent reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the obstacles and efforts that could be made to improve adolescent reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Researchers for this scoping review focused solely on answering research objectives and summarizing related to the implementation of reproductive health services in developed and developing countries, rather than focusing on a single service location.

#### CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The overall conclusion of the article was that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a change in the health-care system, particularly reproductive health services for adolescents, in both developing and developed countries. Adolescents face barriers to accessing reproductive health services due to personal factors, socio-cultural differences, structural disparities in services, unfriendly health workers, and confusing policies. The gap found was that in developed countries reproductive health services were not only provided directly, but also via telehealth or online services, while in developing countries, the development of online-based reproductive health services has not been widely developed so that it had quite an impact during the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the community being confused about how to access reproductive health services during the current pandemic, and this was one of the obstacles in accessing reproductive health services. The findings of this scoping review can be used to provide information to service providers about the obstacles that adolescents face, as well as considerations for the government in developing policies related to adolescent reproductive health services during the Covid-19 pandemic to reduce the problems that adolescents face.

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#### ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This type of research is a scoping review so the researcher does not register an ethical review.

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#### Statement of Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest in the research or preparation of the manuscript

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