



## Exploration of Anxiety in Elderly with Hypertension During Covid-19 Pandemic in Jetis Yogyakarta

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### ABSTRACT

Anxiety about the COVID-19 pandemic is the most common mental health problem, including among the elderly. One of the effects of anxiety on physical health during the COVID-19 pandemic is hypertension or high blood pressure, especially for the elderly with hypertension. Anxiety experienced by the elderly with hypertension has an impact on the behavior of the elderly toward the condition of their health, such as a reduced interest elderly to visit health services. The aims: Explore the anxiety in elderly with hypertension during a covid-19 pandemic. Research method: Using a qualitative phenomenological approach on 8 elderlies with hypertension through in-depth interviews. Results of the study: Showing the anxiety of the elderly with hypertension during the Covid-19 pandemic includes the anxiety condition of the elderly with hypertension, coping anxiety of the elderly with hypertension, and family support for the elderly with hypertension. Conclusion: Anxiety felt by hypertensive elderly in this study included fear of using public transportation, worry to interact with others and the assumption that Covid-19 was a threat caused the comorbid. Coping that they used to control the anxiety are praying, taking a rest, doing a home activity, es and not thinking too much about covid-19. While the family support that they get is emotional support, informational support, instrumental support,t, and appreciation.

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### Kata kunci:

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### ABSTRAK

Kecemasan terhadap pandemi COVID-19 menjadi masalah kesehatan mental yang paling banyak dijumpai pada setiap orang termasuk di kalangan lanjut usia. Pengaruh dari kecemasan terhadap kesehatan fisik yang dirasakan di masa pandemi COVID-19 salah satunya adalah hipertensi atau tekanan darah tinggi terutama pada lansia hipertensi. Kecemasan yang dialami lansia hipertensi berdampak pada perilaku lansia terhadap kondisi kesehatan seperti berkurangnya minat lansia untuk berkunjung ke pelayanan kesehatan. Tujuan penelitian penelitian ini untuk mengeksplorasi kecemasan yang terjadi pada lansia dengan hipertensi di masa pandemi COVID-19. Metode penelitian Menggunakan kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi yang dilakukan pada 8 lansia hipertensi melalui wawancara *in-depth interview*. Kecemasan lansia hipertensi di masa pandemi Covid-19 mencakup pengalaman awal lansia terdiagnosa hipertensi, perilaku lansia selama memiliki hipertensi, penularan covid-19 menurut lansia hipertensi, kecemasan lansia hipertensi, koping kecemasan lansia hipertensi, upaya lansia menjaga kesehatan dimasa pandemic, respon lansia setelah kasus covid-19 melandai dan dukungan keluarga terhadap lansia hipertensi. Kecemasan yang dirasakan oleh lansia hipertensi pada penelitian meliputi kecemasan yang muncul pada saat pandemi Covid-19, perasaan takut menggunakan transportasi umum, perasaan khawatir berinteraksi dengan orang lain dan anggapan bahwa Covid-19 merupakan ancaman bagi kesehatan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Kecemasan terhadap pandemi COVID-19 menjadi masalah kesehatan mental yang paling banyak dijumpai pada setiap orang termasuk di kalangan lanjut usia. Pengaruh dari kecemasan terhadap kesehatan fisik yang dirasakan di masa pandemi COVID-19 salah satunya adalah hipertensi atau tekanan darah tinggi terutama pada lansia hipertensi. Kecemasan yang dialami lansia hipertensi berdampak pada perilaku lansia terhadap kondisi kesehatan seperti berkurangnya minat lansia untuk berkunjung ke pelayanan kesehatan. Tujuan penelitian penelitian ini untuk mengeksplorasi kecemasan yang terjadi pada lansia dengan hipertensi di masa pandemi COVID-19. Metode penelitian Menggunakan kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi yang dilakukan pada 8 lansia hipertensi melalui wawancara *in-depth interview*. Kecemasan lansia hipertensi di masa pandemi Covid-19 mencakup pengalaman awal lansia terdiagnosa hipertensi, perilaku lansia selama memiliki hipertensi, penularan covid-19 menurut lansia hipertensi, kecemasan lansia hipertensi, koping kecemasan lansia hipertensi, upaya lansia menjaga kesehatan dimasa pandemic, respon lansia setelah kasus covid-19 melandai dan dukungan keluarga terhadap lansia hipertensi. Kecemasan yang dirasakan oleh lansia hipertensi pada penelitian meliputi kecemasan yang muncul pada saat pandemi Covid-19, perasaan takut menggunakan transportasi umum, perasaan khawatir berinteraksi dengan orang lain dan anggapan bahwa Covid-19 merupakan ancaman bagi kesehatan.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ

"(Namely) those who believe and their hearts find peace in the remembrance of Allah. Remember, only in the remembrance of Allah does the heart find peace."

At-Tabari interprets the verse above that hearts of the believers to belongs to the group of companions of the Prophet Muhammad, one cannot have essential peace of mind without the dhikr of Allah. If there is, it is only relative or not absolute and temporary (Fahimah, 2019). Remembering Allah SWT with dhikr and through the verses of the Qur'an, can eliminate the anxiety in the hearts of those who believe.

Anxiety in elderly with hypertension has an impact on the interest of elderly to visit health services. Preliminary study data shows a decrease in the number of elderly visiting the Jetis Public Health Center in Yogyakarta, which is 39.17%

from 2019-to 2021 to control their health. This decrease in data also occurred in the elderly with hypertension, namely 37.7% from 2019 to 2021. Some elderly are afraid to go to the puskesmas to check their health condition or to control their disease even though the drug supply runs out, have sleep disturbances, feel restless, and are afraid of leaving the house (Sirait, 2020).

## METHOD

This study used qualitative research methods. The approach that will be used in this research is a phenomenological approach where researchers can apply their interpersonal subjectivity and allows respondents to express their intentions about life experiences and feelings without being demanding. Participants who will be taken in this study are the elderly who suffer from hypertension. The sampling technique in this study was done by purposive sampling with inclusion criteria: hypertensive elderly, elderly aged 60 years and over, elderly in Jetis Yogyakarta health center area, elderly with mild anxiety, elderly with total independence, and elderly with moderate to intact cognitive function. The number of participants in this study amounted to 8 people. This research was conducted in the working area of the Jetis Public Health Center, Yogyakarta City. This study uses the method of collecting through semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are included in in-depth interviews or in-depth interviews, researchers have the freedom to ask questions according to the topic of discussion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results showed that there were 3 major themes and 11 sub-themes from qualitative data analysis obtained from in-depth interviews with eight participants with questions referring to the research objectives. The themes generated in this research are:

### Theme 1. The anxiety of the Elderly with Hypertension

The results showed that the anxiety experienced by the hypertensive elderly consisted of anxiety at the beginning of the pandemic, a feeling of fear of riding a motorcycle taxi, a feeling of fear of interacting with other people, and covid is a threat to health. The results of this study are evidenced by the statements of the participants below:

Keyword	Sub-themes
P1 : "The first time I knew it was scared. Just want to go out afraid. The virus is not visible, if it comes out, for example, some people don't know to continue face-to-face, by the way, I'm afraid of it later if I get to hit"	Anxiety at the beginning of the pandemic
P2 : "In the past, I didn't know, for a long time, how come the news showed many died, many were hit by it. So you have to be careful, afraid of joining the bandwagon because if it used to be right again, it was"	
P7 : "If it was during the early days of covid, it was not free, yes, want to go everywhere there was a bad taste. It's not free. while we take care of ourselves, if you look at the people on the exit it's rich how about mba"	
P8 : "Yes, because the environment here is also a lot of people who got hit ya mba first. I'm afraid it's yo nek there is an ambulance, continue to know that there is a broadcast. It's afraid of it. dikit-dikit some died. When the emergency was in the past, it was an ambulance pacing in front of here. Yes, I saw it from the glass. The problem used to be that here there was it put in one closed ambulance. Just announced. If the hospital is not taken home, it is immediately buried. Can't be taken home"	
P4 : "Yes, sometimes nek when you want to tease it mba. Afraid of getting dry, what is it if the motorcycle taxi driver's handle? If it goes up, it must be the handle to mba I wong the leg hurts. Dadine pointed out. Sometimes it's afraid. We don't know, whose bar you are at. I don't know mba. Cause, when I come home from work, was	Fear of riding a motorcycle taxi

<i>riding taxi bike"</i>	
P8 : "I usually go to my brother's house by motorcycle taxi, now I don't want to. To close with the rider, right? I don't want. Now use that grab car, cleanly. Wherever you use a grab car. In the past, if the motorcycle taxi was stuck. The helmet was shared with others. disgusted hehe.. my grandson is also if you want to go where is his helmet? Don't want people's used helmets. Traces of sweat people are disgusted"	
P1 : "if the neighbors are on that end, yes.. yaa kind of scared. But I do. Anyway, I'm, what is it? just in case you. As if you know he's hit, what does he want? That's how long it is. Wear a mask. The important thing is that I don't hold him, don't hold him, don't talk much face-to-face."	Fear of interacting with people
P2 : "sometimes ya are a bit anxious mba, if someone is sick, coughing, I am afraid of the tightness. Just keep your distance"	
P8 : "Ya scared hehe.. afraid, talking with others. Just greetings? I don't want to. They said this covid is infectious. Let's just talk about it. So scared. It is true. Never came out. Now how long has it been? Just stay in the market and know me anyway. Yes, now nothing is online, already so. just go online. Never been to those markets, these two years hehe"	
P1 : "threats too mba. The important thing is to remain vigilant, follow government regulations"	Covid-19 is a threat to health
P3 : "I thought it's a threat too. In fact, many victims are infected, knowing the shortness of breath. The pretentiously checked, o this hit haha. Yaa, it's a threat. If we don't have any thoughts, just up to us, it turns out many who reckless hit. Just obedient with the government"	
P4 : "Yes, it's a threat mba. Sometimes it's afraid if we hit by this covid. I'm afraid that when I get sick, I cough up the item, because coughed up a cold it was annulled into covid. I have a lot of diseases, yes, I'm afraid of contracting it yo there but if you can don't let it be mba"	

**Theme 2. Coping Anxiety of Elderly with Hypertension**

activities at home, and don't stress. The results of this study are evidenced by the statements of the participants below:

The results showed that coping anxiety in elderly with hypertension against COVID-19 consisted of praying, doing

Keyword	Sub-themes
P2 : "yaa, getting do'a my children and grandchildren are kept away from the covid right. Ask for health, and safety. the prayer of dhuha inshallah continues until now. If tahajjud is sometimes yes, people are old sometimes males or how about it hehe"	Praying
P4 : "confidence yes mba. I'm sure I'm protected. The important thing is that the effort was to mba so that it would not be infected. Praying with God."	
P7 : "always praying every night. We're Muslims, right? Pray, just pray. I kept worrying about nothing."	
P1 : "Yes, it is made a normal activity mba, rich housewives, yes cleaning, nyuci, cooking, ngeladeni grandchildren. So mba"	Doing activities at home
P2 : "yes what is it? made the most mba activity. Yes cook the same nyuci it's the most"	
P5 : "yes anyway, you don't have to think so much"	
P7 : "yes sorry I'm not arrogant or how. I avoid being anxious mba. The problem is that if you are anxious, your immune system will drop. It's not good to mba if you are anxious"	
P8 : "how yaa, just forget it. That's it. Don't think about it. If you think about it so stressed we too? Well there. Don't let"	

**Theme 3. Family Support of Elderly with Hypertension**

consisted of emotional support, informational support, instrumental support, and appreciation support. The results of this study are evidenced by the statements of the participants below:

The results showed that the family support given to the hypertensive elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic

Keyword	Sub-themes
P4 : "yes if I'm sick my son said, get me checked out mom. Or massage. I'm delivering"	Emotional Support
P5 : "yes my kids are always monitoring keeping an eye on mba. the one at home is 2. The one who was told the news continued"	
P6 : "the sister who is here must be nanya, have you cooked yet? Continue to deliver food frequently"	
P8 : "my sister is behind the fold always saying, mba nothing koe ki tell the children, don't move alone"	Informational support
P6 : "I live depending on who I want to be with. If you want to be with the brother who is in Sleman, yes, brother knows "koe ki kudu ngene-ngene" so. it depends on who I want to talk to"	
P7 : "most of the father told me to exercise often, exercise regularly anyway. Yes, most of you reminded me that it was a walk that morning. Don't just diem it"	Instrumental support
P1 : "my youngest son asked me what pain he kept buying medicine to the dispensary"	
P3 : "sometimes yo my younger siblings, my sons, my son-in-law gives me "iki dhe ngge blonjo. Ngge tuku sayur". But not often. I thought do not want to depend"	
P4 : "yes my kids often send money to me. But I still work on my own. So bored if you are at home continue not to do anything"	Appreciation support
P8 : "yesterday's birthday was on full here. The children are also on vacation to be on the coming, rame also thank God. Now, this is just my birthday here the tone that came from Bandung, from Jakarta. Made in my big tumpeng"	

### Theme 1. The anxiety of the Elderly with Hypertension

Anxiety is a sense of worry that someone can experience because of danger, threat, or stressor which is characterized by tension and negative affect. The results showed that on average, participants appeared anxious at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, some participants also said that anxiety arose when riding motorcycle taxis and when interacting with other people. Four participants said that anxiety arose at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic because of the large number of news broadcasts of infected people and people dying from COVID-19. The environmental conditions where many of the participants lived and the ambulances ringing around the house every day added to the anxiety level of participants at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three participants said that Covid-19 was a threat to their health condition. This was conveyed because of the large number of people who were confirmed to have COVID-19 and died from COVID. In addition, participants also said that COVID-19 was a threat because they had co-morbidities such as hypertension and diabetes mellitus. Hakim (2020) explained that the available information shows that the majority of the dead victims due to COVID-19 in Indonesia were the elderly group more than 60 years old. Covid-19 is a real threat to the elderly because the elderly are a vulnerable group and the number of elderly people in Indonesia is very high. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics in 2019 showed that the percentage of Indonesian elderly reached 9.6% of the total population of approximately 25.64 million people. It can be said that COVID-19 threatens 80% of the elderly in Indonesia.

### Theme 2. Coping anxiety of Elderly with Hypertension

Coping is an effort to prevent stress due to existing problems with behavioral and cognitive changes to gain comfort in oneself. The results showed that the coping anxiety of participants included praying, looking for other activities, and not thinking too much about stress-triggering factors.

Five participants said praying is one thing that can reduce anxiety because of self-confidence. Of these five participants, 3 participants were Muslim. Participants pray during the 5 daily obligatory prayers, dhuhya prayers, and tahajjud prayers. Meanwhile, 2 non-Muslim participants are Catholic and Christian. Participants said to pray anytime and when they woke up at night. All participants believed that God would always protect them when they prayed. Rahayu (2021) states that the elderly feel calmer, feel life is more meaningful and anxiety is lower if they have high religious beliefs. Researchers assume the level of anxiety in the elderly will be lower if the level of spirituality is high.

Three participants said how to reduce anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic by doing some activities such as cooking, washing, cleaning the house, singing, and serving the family. The elderly believe that if they have other activities or have fun, their anxiety will decrease. In line with Siringoringo's (2021) research conducted on the elderly at HKBP Immanuel Sei Semayang, it showed that to reduce the stress of the elderly due to the impact of the coronavirus, was by doing activities that could distract and make them happier. Four participants said they try not to think too much about the COVID-19 pandemic because it can cause anxiety. They try to dismiss the thoughts or feelings of anxiety they feel because they believe that if anxiety is left alone it will interfere with health conditions. Krisnatuti

(2021) states that coping practices are an effort to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Respondents tried to take lessons and see the good side behind the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Theme 3. Family Support of Elderly with Hypertension

Family support is an important component in the lives of the elderly with comorbid hypertension during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the study stated that four families' support emerged, namely emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appreciation support.

Three families supports that often appear are emotional support, instrumental support, and informational support, while appreciation support is very rarely given by families. Appreciation support in this study was only felt by one participant in the form of birthday celebrations by children, grandchildren, and relatives. Rekawati (2020) describes appreciation support as family feedback to family members to evaluate themselves or assess the situation. The award support received by the elderly is involvement in family events and family deliberations. Appreciation support can increase self-esteem, and motivate and improve the psychosocial status of the elderly because they feel valued, needed, and useful in the family.

Six participants said that they got their emotional needs from their families. Several things that show the emotional support obtained are the participant's family often monitors and asks how they are by telephone or WhatsApp for some participants who have children or nephews from different homes, families often take participants to go to health services, families often remind to always take care of themselves during the pandemic, families often ask questions about the situation and deliver food to participants' homes, watch television together and discuss health.

Some of the instrumental support that the elderly get is the fulfillment of treatment by the family, giving money to children and relatives, giving masks, honey, and vitamins, and buying clothes. Hanum (2018) states that family support is a source of concrete and practical help for the elderly. Instrumental support can be in the form of meeting needs in terms of eating and drinking, rest, medication, financial assistance, time, equipment, environmental modification, and help if the sufferer feels stressed.

Informational support provides health information such as regular exercise, information about BPJS, giving advice not to work too hard for the health of participants, and other information needed by participants. Azizah (2019) states that informational support is the support that is needed by the elderly to get information about something, especially health. Health information in this case that is needed by the elderly is about hypertension. Informational family support becomes very important for the elderly considering that due to the age of the elderly, the development of cognitive function decreases or the memory of the elderly decreases which results in the elderly sometimes having difficulty understanding the disease.

### LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Besides, the limited time of the study also prevented the researcher from conducting interviews with older people with hypertension.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The anxiety felt by the hypertensive elderly in this study included anxiety that arose during the Covid-19 pandemic, feelings of fear of using public transportation, feelings of worrying about interacting with other people, and the assumption that Covid-19 was a threat to health because they had comorbid hypertension. Anxiety is felt by the elderly, but in this case, the elderly have good coping strategies to reduce the anxiety they feel, such as praying, doing other activities, and not being overly concerned or stressed.

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## ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences UMY No.335/EC-KEPK FKIK UMY/XI/2021 approved this study.

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## Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no competing interests in this study.

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