

Safe Sexual Behaviors for Early Detection and Prevention of HIV/AIDS Transmission among Queers in Tulungagung, East Java, Using Theory of Planned Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Background: Sexual intercourse is one of the primary modes of HIV transmission. Sexual activity among heterosexuals has the highest risk of HIV transmission. However, sexual activity among queers also contributed much of the HIV/AIDS case increase. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection was high among queers in Tulungagung, East Java. This study aimed to examine safe sexual behaviors for early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission among queers using Theory of Planned Behavior.

Subjects and Method: This was a qualitative study with phenomenology approach. The study was carried out at queers' peer group namely Aprikot basecamp, Tulungagung, East Java, from 23 April to 17 June 2017. The informants in this study included queers with positive HIV status and those with negative HIV status. These informants consisted of queer commercial sex workers, queers with steady partner, queers who had recently been registered as Aprikot members, queers who had become Aprikot members for long, Cesmid NGO, program manager of Local Commission for AIDS Control, health personnels, and officers at District Health Office Tulungagung. The informants were selected by maximum variation sampling. The data were collected using in-depth interview, observation, and document review methods. The data were analyzed by interactive analysis method, including data collection, data reduction, data display, and verification.

Results: Five queer informants who worked as commercial sex workers were HIV positive. A queer informant who owned beauty salon had a steady partner. In general, queers had positive attitude towards early detection and prevention of HIV by undertaking regular three monthly HIV tests. The subjective norm in the community was very influential such that all Aprikot members always complied with every rule available in the community. As a result, the queers had a stronger intention to do HIV early detection and prevention.

Conclusion: Subjective norm is an important determinant for HIV early detection and prevention among queers. It is suggested that the positive norm in the community pertinent to sexual behavior be capitalized and strengthened so as to increase adherence to healthy and safe sexual behaviors among the queers.

Keywords: risky sexual behaviors, early detection, prevention, HIV/ AIDS, queer

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BACKGROUND

Transgender is a transvestite or men who psychologically feel that they are not compatible with her physical genitals so they wear clothes or other attributes of other sexes which is woman's (Koeswinarno, 2005). Meanwhile, Puspitosari (2005) states that

transvestites are those who are physically male but psychologically tend to look as beautiful as women. According to Kartono (2005) transvestites are symptoms of wanting to have sexuality contrary to their physical structure. Transsexual is if someone changes their physical shape through plas-

tic surgery or injecting sex hormones and discards their penis and testicles and forms a vaginal opening (Danandjaja, 2003).

Transvestites tend to like men, so their sexual orientation is homosexual. In sexual relations, transvestites cannot act as men and will be happy if they are treated as transvestites (Puspitosari, 2005). The form of sexual intercourse known to transvestites is anal sex while sleeping, oral sex, anal sex while squatting, kissing, and masturbation. Transvestites have never had sexual relations with transvestites or with gay (homosexual). Transvestites are more interested in men. Basically the most frequent sexual intercourse between Transvestites is anal sex and oral sex (Bakri, 2009).

HIV can be transmitted, one of them is sexual intercourse. Although heterosexuals are the highest, it cannot be denied that homosexuals, especially transvestites, also contribute to the increase in HIV/AIDS cases. The Ministry of Health estimates that the number of transvestites in Indonesia is 20,960 to 35,300. In 2007, transvestites who were registered and had Identity Cards reached 3,887 million. According to the Integrated Biology and Behavior Survey (STB-P) related to the prevalence of HIV in Three Cities in Indonesia in 2007, there were 34% of HIV-positive transgender women, followed by Surabaya and Bandung (Rabudiarti, 2007).

In Tulungagung, the number of people with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) until August 2015 was 1,328 people who were detected through VCT examinations. Distribution of cases of HIV/AIDS in Tulungagung, from 19 sub-districts, the highest 4 are in Kedungwaru with the number of people living with HIV 86 people. In Ngunut, there are 74 people. In Tulungagung, there are 73 people and in Ngantru, there are 62 people, because in the four sub-districts there are fairly localized large (KPA Tulungagung, 2015).

Most people with HIV/AIDS are commercial sex workers, homosexuals, injecting drug user, and transvestites (male women). They get HIV/AIDS because of the working environment, environmental influences, and lifestyle. In an effort to handle and prevent HIV/AIDS, Tulungagung District Government and the Health Office of Tulungagung district have attempted to collect data on people who are at risk of being affected and suffering from HIV/AIDS. This effort is carried out by opening HIV/AIDS testing services in various hospitals and related institutions.

As one proof of the concern of the Tulungagung transvestites with the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in Tulungagung, they established an association with members of the transvestites throughout Tulungagung under the name of the *Apresiasi Waria Kota* (Aprikot) Tulungagung consists of 55 people, in which all transvestites are required to become members of Aprikot. If you do not want to join, the transvestites cannot hang out or just wear clothes or dress up like women. If there is a violation, there is punishment, namely physical punishment, such as being beaten, cut off on fake hair, and so on. The activities carried out in addition to social gathering is a VCT examination and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases on a monthly basis by inviting health center health personnel in which the social gathering is held, and if the results of the examination is positive, it will be referred to the General Hospital of Dr. Iskak Tulungagung for further handling. Since the establishment of the VCT clinic in 2006 until now in Tulungagung there were 1,480 new patients found with findings from 56.42% medical referrals; come alone 24.59%; Mobile VCT 12.16% and from other references 6.82% (KPA Tulungagung, 2016).

Based on research by Heniwati (2011) about the determinants of transgender beh-

avior in offering condom use to sex partners in 5 major cities in Indonesia, the result shows that they have never offered condoms to customers so that condom use when selling sex is quite low. According to Simamora (2014) the thing that showed low condom use is due to low support from the government regarding the policy of condom use in transgender commercial sex sellers. Whereas, according to Rabudiarti (2007) it is stated that beside the lack of support from the government or the closest person related to condom use shows that there were subjects who agreed and there were also some who disagreed because of the pain and discomfort. Shemale in Tulungagung mostly work as commercial sex workers, as a tire repairman, village officials, and others. They also are married and have children, but if the soul of women who are in themselves cannot be dammed at a certain time they show themselves as women. There are also those who live together with a man and become a life partner.

The explanation above shows that transvestites are a group at risk of increasing the number of HIV/AIDS cases, especially for Tulungagung Regency which will potentially have an increase in HIV/AIDS cases because the relatively large number of transvestites estimated at 100 transvestites. Therefore, researchers are interested in further analyzing the behavior of transvestites in the effort of early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Tulungagung District with Planned of Behavior Theory in Tulungagung District, East Java.

This planned behavioral theory is primarily focused on the theory of reason action which is intense individuals to carry out certain behaviors. Intense is thought to be able to see motivational factors that influence behavior. Intense is an indication of how hard the person or individual wants to

try and how much effort an individual will make to perform a behavior.

SUBJECTS AND METHOD

1. Study Design

This was qualitative study with descriptive phenomenology approach. The informants of this study were transvestites, Chair of the Aprikot Organization, Chair of the AIDS Commission of Tulungagung Regency, Member of the NGO Cesmid, Health Center Officer of Tulungagung.

Descriptive phenomenology design is a qualitative study strategy in which the researcher identifies the nature of the participant's subjective experience of a phenomenon through his perspective (according to his thoughts and feelings) (Riyanto, 2009). In this process, researchers first set aside their own assumptions regarding the phenomenon under study (bracketing) so that they can understand the information provided by the participants studied. Next the researcher focuses on the main phenomena and ends on thematic data analysis and descriptive appearance, namely indications of the meaning and core expression of phenomena (Husserl, 1938 in Daymon, 2008, and Creswell, 2010).

2. Sampling Technique

The method of selecting informants was done with Maximum variation sampling, namely individuals or groups of individuals selected to represent the lowest stage and the highest stage in something variable (or characteristic) that has a continuous value (Murti, 2013).

Sources of data used in this study include key informant of 1 person, 6 main informants, and informants supporting of 4 people.

The key informant is the Chairman of the Aprikot Organization, the main informant is transgender who is HIV positive and works as a prostitute amounting to 5 people

and who have a permanent and negative partner of 1 person, as well as supporting informants include the NGO Management Cesium of 1 person, Tulungagung City Health Center officer as VCT Mobile implementer of 1 person, Program Implementer from KPAD of 1 person and from the Tulungagung District Health Office of 1 person.

3. Setting

The study was conducted in the *Komunitas Apresiasi Waria Kota (Aprikot)* in Tulungagung Regency. The choice of location due to the increase in HIV/AIDS in the last 5 years has increased dramatically compared to the surrounding districts/cities and 80% of the transgender in Tulungagung District are HIV positive.

This study was conducted from April 23 to June 17 2017. The time to conduct an interview was in accordance with the agreement with the research informant, namely at the time of the monthly gathering held starting at 16.00 WIB until 21.00 WIB.

4. Data Collection Technique

The data were collected using in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The technique of checking the validity of the data used is the triangulation technique, namely triangulation of sources, methods, and theories. The data analysis techniques in the study were the interactive models of Miles and Huberman which consisted of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and verification or conclusion drawing. This study applied the Theory of Planned Behavior.

RESULTS

Based on the results of the study, it was found that of the 6 transvestites who were the subjects of the study, there were 5 transvestites who worked as prostitutes and 1 transvestite who worked as a salon owner. The Aprikot organization has 55 members

and almost all of its members are HIV positive because they work as sex workers who are vulnerable to contracting HIV.

Aprikot is the only transvestite organization in Tulungagung to provide support, protection, assistance, and advocacy to its members who obtain improper treatment from the community. This organization aims to fight for the rights of transvestites and facilitate the transgender community in the City of Tulungagung which is vulnerable to violence from customers, from the families of customers, from authorities such as the police or the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) who are working to regulate the area and fellow transvestites because of certain cases and protect their members from the spread of PMS which is identical to the majority of their work as prostitutes.

According to the level of education, *Aprikot* members transgender are at least elementary school graduates, while the highest is high school graduates, with the Aprikot Chair holding a Bachelor degree. Based on the results of interviews that have been conducted on education status, the low educational factor also influences the communication process for offering condom use before sexual intercourse causing the transgender to be vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS and other STD.

According to the area of its origin, Aprikot transgender members came from Tulungagung and its surroundings, such as Kediri, Trenggalek, Blitar and Ponorogo Regencies. Most of the transvestites came from Tulungagung Regency (67%) followed by Blitar District / City and Trenggalek Regency which were 12% of the total Aprikot transgender members. Migrant transvestites are usually caused by being rejected by family and society or not getting a place to work in their hometown, so the most promising and safest place for working transvestites is in Tulungagung Regency. The diff-

iculty of employment for transvestites causes them to work only as Commercial Sex Workers (CSWs).

Subjective norms or support from the closest people and communities that support transvestites in the effort of early detection and HIV prevention in Aprikot organizations are very influential because in the organization, support from the chairman and fellow members is very solid, so that all members voluntarily apply the applicable rules, which is to do VCT Mobile regularly every three months. This was supported by the opinion of VCT Mobile officers who stated that VCT Mobile examinations were always welcomed by transgender women without any coercion to carry out tests according to their existing schedule.

The results of the study show that all informants explained that early detection and prevention of HIV is very beneficial because early detection will speed up treatment because it is detected as early as possible, before the virus or microbes have not undermined the informants' immune system further. Prevention of HIV with condoms is very useful also because by preventing HIV transmission, the body's resistance or the body's condition of the informant will be maintained.

Aprikot transvestites members have the intention to prevent HIV transmission from customers to transvestites and from transvestites to customers by always offering to use condoms before sexual intercourse, but customers often refuse to use condoms for many reasons, such as discomfort when using condoms.

Intention or intense from transvestites to conduct early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS is very strong so that transvestites have good behavior to make early detection and prevention of HIV / AIDS in which the behavior of transvestites is influenced by the attitude of positive transvestit-

es towards early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS, subjective norms that support and inhibit the conduct of early detection and prevention of HIV / AIDS and the intention of transvestites to maintain their health as well as the intention to make early detection efforts and prevention of HIV/ AIDS so as to shape the behavior of transvestites to always make early detection and make efforts to prevent HIV / AIDS by using condoms every time they have sexual intercourse.

DISCUSSIONS

The characteristics of queers who were the members of the Aprikot Organization showed that almost all queers worked as CSW and around 16 to 50 years old. According to Sandinata (2007), it was stated that being a queer was not a strange, bad and deviant thing, but it was because their own desire and this was indeed the identity of informants, which were women who trapped in men's bodies, in addition, the informant felt comfortable by being a queer rather than being a man. Padang (2012) stated that the queers were vulnerable to be infected by HIV due to changing sexual partners. Whereas Firdaus (2011) stated that queers were marginalized people so it was difficult to get decent jobs, so most transgender can only work as prostitutes due to low education.

This was in line with Rinny (2015) who stated that there was a correlation between knowledge, perceived susceptibility, perceived benefit, and perceived barrier with the changes of sexual behavior of the research subjects, and the most influential variable was knowledge. Therefore, with the queers' knowledge about the concept of HIV/AIDS, then the prevention and early detection of HIV/AIDS would also be good. This was supported by the results of study conducted by Vicca (2013) which stated that there was a relationship between good

knowledge and efforts to prevent HIV/AIDS transmission in queers.

Based on the data above, queers always have low education because they got difficulties in getting the education. This was due to the rejection they experienced, as revealed by Firdaus (2011) which stated that queers always faced various problems, such as economic problems which made them difficult to get a job, and also legal issues related to gender and social. Low education would make the queers difficult to communicate or convince their customers to use condoms, as Heniwati (2011) stated that lack of education would lead to the difficulty to communicate or convince the customers to use condoms in every sexual activity to prevent HIV transmission.

The socio-cultural life of the Indonesian people which showed that some people categorized the queers as deviant behavior, it caused the existence of these groups to be excluded or to get unpleasant behavior, such as acts of violence both physically and mentally and emotionally by women and men. In addition, people also did violence and isolation, presumptions or culture in Indonesia which assumed that queers were not specialized or privileged such as in Oman, Mongols, or other places that considered the queers as saints and became great and respected. One of Indonesian cultures that considered the queers as the companion was Ponorogo Regency, a Warok in order to master their knowledge and can reach the highest level must have a man between the ages of nine and seventeen who must be willing to serve both physically and sexually (Nadia, 2015). Therefore, queers were only underestimated by some people because they only worked to satisfy men's desires. As a minority group, individuals and transgender communities were faced with various problems including the threat of HIV/AIDS. Kristin (2008) mentioned

that queers were susceptible to sexually transmitted diseases and also suffer from colon disease because when they did anal sex, the penis would touch the colon which contained many bacteria, in addition, it was also susceptible to mouth and throat diseases when they did oral sex.

Queers sexual behavior was more susceptible to be infected by HIV and other STDs due to multiple sexual partners, ways of queers' sexual activity which were anal sex and oral sex which increased the risk of transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Bakri, 2009). Looking from the sexual activity that was mostly anal sex, it was possible that the queers can be infected by various types of venereal diseases (Firdaus, 2011). In addition, queers and customers were also susceptible to disease because an erect penis and penetration into the anus can reach the sigmoid colon, and the colon contained many bacteria so that the bacteria can infect the penis (Kristin, 2008), and was also susceptible to throat cancer due to penetration with oral sex (Nguyen et al. 2016). Whereas according to Bakri (2009), it was stated that some diseases were transmitted through oral and genital contacts, namely chlamydia, genital herpes, gonorrhoea, hepatitis B, HIV, and warts (Bakri, 2009). This was in line with a study by Nyitray (2016) which stated that men or sexual partners who have multiple partners and did sexual activity through anal were more likely to have sexually transmitted diseases and HIV than those who have fewer partners.

With the existence of Aprikot organization, the queers felt protected both socially and in terms of health. From a social perspective, queers can adapt and communicate with organizations about the various problems that they face. They were legally protected because the Aprikot leader would protect them if there was a raid. In addition, in

terms of health, the queers were required to regularly conduct HIV and STD tests for early detection of the transmission of Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV, counseling or information about health by bringing competent speakers from the Health Center or from NGO that have collaborated with Aprikot. In addition, Aprikot always provide some condoms in the community, so that Aprikot members have no difficulties in accessing condom supplies for the prevention of STD and HIV. According to the Ministry of Health in 2014, prevention of HIV transmission through sexual activity was done through: 1) Not having sexual activity (abstinence); 2) Being loyal to a partner (be faithful); 3) Using condoms consistently (condom use); 4) Avoid abuse of drugs or addictive substances (no drug); 5) Improving prevention capabilities through education including treating STD as early as possible (education); 6) Conducting other prevention which was through circumcision.

Prevention and early detection of HIV/AIDS efforts have been done by the queers, but they cannot deny the expectations of the customers so they were vulnerable to be contracted by STD and HIV. The perception of queers about HIV was no longer a threatening or frightening disease. According to some informants in this study, HIV was the biggest threat in its current condition, which was having multiple partners and having unsafe sexual activity or not using condoms. There were also some informants who consider HIV as a small threat because some of the informants have been positive, but the decrease in endurance or a decreased immune system became the informants' threat because they would no longer be productive. To prevent a decline in endurance that has a bad impact in the future, then the informants were always regularly checked themselves to health per-

sonnel such as VCT Mobile, Health Center, and the Public Hospital of Tulungagung Regency. In Tulungagung Regency, there were 12 Health Centers that handle VCT and STD and also 1 Hospital that handled HIV/AIDS referrals in the Tulungagung area and its surroundings, such as referrals from Trenggalek Regency, Pacitan Regency, Ponorogo Regency, Regency/City, and also Kediri Regency/City. The efforts of early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS that have been conducted by Aprikot members was supported by the statement of Wimon-sate (2015), based on the results of his research in Thailand, a campaign for gays, men who have sex with men (MSM) and queers must be done by doing HIV/AIDS test at least once a year to maintain health and increase the productivity of queers, gay and MSM.

The results of this study analyzed the sexual behavior, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of queers in early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS in Tulungagung District indicated that the informants' understanding of the concept of HIV/AIDS was good and it followed by a positive attitude towards HIV/AIDS. This was shown by all the informants who stated that every time they had sexual activity, they suggested their partners to use condoms as the prevention of HIV/AIDS transmission and to conduct tests every three months for early detection of STD, including HIV. However, this positive attitude was not supported by the implementation of good HIV/AIDS prevention behaviors. Almost all informants have implemented good HIV prevention behaviors by using condoms during sexual activity, but they did not get support from customers because they often refused to use condoms for various reasons, which lead to increased HIV transmission among queers. Support from the Aprikot leader and other members of the organization was needed so

that the queers have good behavior toward the prevention and early detection of HIV/AIDS transmission.

In this study, all informants argued that the barrier of queers in behaving positively towards early detection and prevention of HIV was the prevention, because early detection was an obligation of Aprikot members to conduct HIV and other STD tests, health personnels who helped them were also friendly and respect the human rights of queers. But there was a big problem in the prevention, which was the unwillingness of customers or sexual partners to use condoms.

Therefore, it was important to provide understanding for queers through non-governmental organizations (NGO) in collaboration with the community. This was intended to give the belief that taking a health test can be useful to know their health status and helping them to feel better about their current health condition. The positive benefits obtained were not only for these individuals but also for protecting their sexual partners.

Theory of Planned Behavior was a theory of behavior changes that has been previously planned by the individual to do a new behavior which he/she considered useful or useful for improving his/her health (Ajzen, 1980). In the TPB theory, there are three main things, namely individual attitudes towards an individual's behavior, intentions to do a behavior and subjective norms that support the individual's intentions. It can be concluded that the attitude of queers in the effort of early detection and prevention of HIV/STD was good, it can be seen from the attitude of queers who always offered condoms to the customers before doing sexual activity. Queers' intentions for early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS was strong because they wanted to always live healthy by using condoms every

time they have sex. Subjective norms that affect queers' intentions to do early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS were also very strong, which was the support of Aprikot leaders who always provide facilities for their members to routinely conduct HIV and STD tests, the support from other Aprikot members was also good, they always provided support and motivation in dealing with a problem. Therefore, the behavior of Aprikot members was good in early detection and prevention of HIV/AIDS efforts in Tulungagung Regency.

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