

# Screening of Mental Problems and Counseling Training for Primary Health for Primary Health Care Staffs to Assess Sintren Dancer in Pemalang, Central Java, Indonesia

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## Screening of mental problems and counseling training for primary health care staffs to assess sintren dancer in Pemalang, Central Java, Indonesia



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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Experiences of trance in Sintren dancer with a history of psychosocial problems, it is possible that comorbidity of mental disorders will appear. One of the Primary Health Care programs is dealing with mental disorders. By providing counseling training to Primary Health Care Staffs, it is hoped that there will be guidance and assistance from the Primary Health Care for the Sintren dancer community.

**Methods:** Screening is carried out to recruit synthetic dancers who have psychological problems and are given counseling. This service involves Primary Health Care Staffs. This service includes networking and treatment and providing counseling to Sintren dancers to deal with the problems they are experiencing.

**Result:** Sintren dancers met the category of mental disorders (dysthymia and PTSD). Primary Health Care Staff had bad experiences in helping people with mental disorders, they are afraid of helping people with mental problems. With counseling training, primary health care staff more confident to help people with mental problems.

**Conclusion:** Sintren dancers have a psychosocial and mental disorder background. Counseling training in Primary Health Care Staff provides understanding of stress management and early detection of mental disorders that often occur in society.

**Keywords:** Sintren, counseling, primary health care, mental problems.

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### INTRODUCTION

Sintren art was previously an artistic tradition rooted in the belief in noble values that are believed on the north coast on the border of West Java and Central Java (Indramayu, Cirebon, and Brebes). Sintren has its uniqueness, beauty, and strangeness, and it is believed that there is magic through the spell of the shaman.<sup>1</sup> Sintren is a traditional Javanese dance art. This art is well known on the north coast of West Java and Central Java, including in Indramayu, Cirebon, Majalengka, Jatibarang, Brebes, Pemalang, Banyumas, Kuningan Regency and Pekalongan. Candidates for Sintren dancers do not need skills, like other dance arts. The Sintren dance is performed by girls who are still virgins because according to the

story, the spirits of angels do not want to enter the bodies of girls who were not virgins.<sup>2</sup>

Sintren dancers born from low-income families and have history of family problems. Poverty has caught them in helplessness to free their burdened family. There were supernatural aspects that must be inherently understood by the Sintren Dancer. Young Sintren Dancer then was tied tightly with ropes wrapped around her hand and then put in to chicken coop. A few moments later, the Shaman (*Pawang/Punduh*) starts chanting a magical spell to The Goddess for approaching Sintren, change her clothes and did the make-up preparing for Sintren Dancer show. When the chicken coop opened, Sintren Dancer changed her appearance into beautiful make up, dressed like a dancer

with black sunglasses with the hand still tied. The Shaman would untie the rope and The Goddess who have seeped into Sintren dancer's body began to dance. The audience applauded and cheered happily watching Sintren suddenly appear in a dancer's dress, exuding an aura of beauty that made men glare at their eyes with a slim waist and full of charm. The Sintren shows a supernatural experience was wonderful and real. As a real event as a little girl is forced to dance without losing her strength, she hopes to get a big income from the audience.<sup>3</sup>

The existence of a trance or trance experience in the artist of the Sintren dancer with a history of psychosocial problems, it is possible that a comorbidity of other mental disorders.<sup>4</sup> Based on this, it is also felt necessary to know Sintren

dancers' perceptions during trance episodes when dancing Sintren.<sup>4</sup> One of the Primary Health Care (Puskesmas) programs is to deal with mental disorders by providing counseling training to Primary Health Care staff. It is hoped that there will be guidance and assistance from the Primary Health Care for the Sintren dancer community.

## METHODS

The purpose of this study is to provide understanding of early detection of mental disorders that often occur in the community and assist them with early counseling. The samples of this research were Sintren dancers and Jebed Primary Health Care staff, Paduraksa Primary Health Care staff, and Pemalang District Health Office Staffs for Mental Health Program.<sup>5</sup>

Screening is carried out to recruit Sintren dancers who have psychiatric problems and then given counseling. The instrument used to assess mental disorders was the Mini International Neuropsychiatry Interview (Mini ICD-10). This dedication will also evaluate the stressors experienced by Sintren dancers based on Indonesian Diagnostic of Mental State Disorder (PPDGJ III).<sup>6</sup>

Counseling service involves Jebed Primary Health Care staff, Paduraksa Primary Health Care staff and Pemalang District Health Office Staffs for Mental Health Program. This service includes networking and treatment and providing counseling to Sintren dancers to deal with the problems they are experiencing.

## RESULTS

Sintren dancers met the category of mental disorders (dysthymia and PTSD).<sup>7</sup> Sintren Dancer shows a similar description of stressors, which is related to the lack of family support, in addition to economic and educational problems.<sup>6</sup>

Sintren Dancers said that they became sintren for economic support of her parents, follows auntie who previously also became sintren, followed her friend as Sintren Dancer, want to be Sintren Dancer and ask her parents to permit her and questioned by the Sintren Dancer community to be their Sintren Dancer

"When I was a child, I saw Sintren happy to get money ... there was no compulsion....I ask the shaman to become Sintren dancer."

They experience possession as "I am in a beautiful house and riding a horse, but people see me dancing in Sintren". They did not feel tired when dancing because moved by Goddess spirit. After the Sintren ended they feel tired but happy because they have money for helping their family. There is no stigma in community for Sintren Dancer "There is no stigma ... what do people just say ... yes, satisfied, feel they can finance their school".

After screening, Sintren Dancer had counseling with Primary Health Care staff about their psychosocial problems. Primary Health Care Staff had bad experiences in helping people with mental disorders, they are afraid of helping people with mental problems. With counseling training, primary health care staff more confident to help people with mental problems.

## DISCUSSION

Almost all of the Sintren dancers are women and not married. In accordance with Putri's research in 2016, the requirements to become a Sintren dancer were virgins. However, one dancer is male as a companion (clown) of the Sintren dancer.<sup>1</sup>

Many factors predispose to mental disorders, where most Sintren dancers meet the dysthymic criteria. This is in accordance with research by Nobile and colleagues in 2003 that a number of factors that are potential candidates for influencing the onset and natural course of dysthymia, for example demographic factors (age, gender, and socioeconomic status), psychopathology, family factors (parenting psychopathology, and history of mood disorders in family) and psychosocial factors (poor support, stressful life events, and poor maternal function).<sup>7,8</sup>

All the Sintren dancers are from less harmonious families. This is in accordance with what was explained by Maharatih et al. regarding the problem of parent-child relations which shows that disputes in marriage cause problems for children.<sup>9</sup> The problems they experience range from depression and withdrawal to behavioral

disorders and poor performance at school.<sup>10</sup> Divorce and remarriage disrupt the relationship between the child's parents and can create painful conflicts. In situations like this, children and adolescents often develop emotional and behavioral problems.<sup>11</sup>

The Sintren dancers admits that they feels comfortable with the Sintren Art Association where they were accepted like family. This was shown by the dancer's feelings and attitudes that feels happy and there is no thought to stop being a synthetic dancer. However, for dancers who think that being a Sintren dancer is a profession, they always try to join other associations where they can get money as a wage after the stage. This is consistent with the literature that shows that in the 60s and 70s, an older tradition approached a relatively isolated culture, different, independent, and had their homeostasis in areas.<sup>12</sup>

Fantasy is one that is unshakable, favorite and recurrent. Regarding the fantasy experienced by dancers, according to Freud, it was explained that people who are prone to depression are people who are orally dependent and need continuous narcissistic gratification. If the individual does not get meaningful love, he will experience depression. If they lose their love object, the defense mechanism is internalization and introjection of the missing object. According to cognitive theory, it is the same as the occurrence of major depressive disorders, namely in situations where there is a mismatch between reality and fantasy resulting in low self-esteem. According to ancestral stories, the belief that dancers are possessed by the goddess of the sky or an angel from the sky is that according to ancestral stories, Sulasih and Sulandono. These beliefs and values make the dancer feel that these Goddess is always guarding her. This is in accordance with the traditional song (*tembang*) that is usually sung when a Sintren dancer is about to perform a Sintren dance, namely that the Goddess will enter the soul of the dancer.

Counseling with Primary Health Care Staffs hopefully can help Sintren dancers with their psychosocial problems. A Sintren Dancer in counseling said "I hope Sintren's income can make up for my high

school certificate which I can't take because I haven't paid my school fees." The mother holds all the patient's money on the grounds that if she is not married the money is held by the mother. However, having worked for a year, according to her mother, the money needed to redeem the certificate has not been collected. This made her sad because she could not immediately find a job with a high school certificate, but on the other hand, she could not bear to her mother. Primary Health Care Staffs help Sintren dancers be more open to telling their problems during counseling and made them feel more relieved.

## CONCLUSION

Sintren dancers have a psychosocial and mental disorder background. Counseling training in Primary Health Care Staffs provides understanding of stress management and early detection of mental disorders that often occur in society.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares there is no conflict of interest regarding publication of this article.

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## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

All participants in this study had received written signed informed consent regarding

participation in this study. All procedures in this study in accordance to Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

Natalia Dewi Wardani and Ani Margawati designed the study; Natalia Dewi Wardani wrote the first version of article; Natalia Dewi Wardani, Innawati Jusup and Titis Hadiati acquired and analysed the data; Fajar Pradana Sarjana worked on the database, Natalia Dewi Wardani and Fajar Pradana Susetya managed patient data.

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