

Parenting stress during the Covid-19 pandemic era: A literature review

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Review Article

ABSTRACT

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

parenting
child
parent
Covid-19

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DOI: 10.20885/JKKI.Vol13.Iss1.art12

History:

Received: March 13, 2021

Accepted: February 22, 2022

Online: May 31, 2022

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Anxiety, stress and depression in parents occur due to Covid-19 and Lockdown. The mental health of the parents has an impact on the child care they do. The aim of this literature review is to synthesize the best available evidence about parenting stress in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. This literature review used 4 databases, namely Pubmed, Ebsco, ScienceDirect and Google Scholar. The inclusion criteria, used in the selection of this study were full text, articles or journals in English, topics about parenting during Covid-19 pandemic era and articles or journals for the last 2 years (2019-2021). NVivo with NVivo 11 plus software were used for data analysis. Eleven journals were obtained based on the screening process and reviewed in this literature. The results of the analysis obtained 3 major themes, namely stressors of parenting in covid-19, parental stress and parenting stress, child abuse and child stress. Support is needed for parents during the Covid-19 pandemic so that parents do not experience stress and provide positive care for their children.

Kecemasan, stress dan depresi pada orang tua terjadi akibat Covid-19 dan Lockdown. Kesehatan mental orang tua berdampak pada pengasuhan anak yang dilakukan. Tujuan dari literature review ini adalah untuk menyatukan evidence terbaik yang tersedia tentang stress pengasuhan di era pandemi covid-19. Literature review ini menggunakan 4 database yaitu Pubmed, Ebsco, ScienceDirect dan Google Scholar. Kriteria inklusi yang digunakan dalam pemilihan studi ini adalah full text, artikel atau jurnal dalam bahasa inggris, topik tentang stress pengasuhan anak di era pandemi covid-19 dan artikel atau jurnal 2 tahun terakhir (2019-2021). Analisis data yang digunakan adalah thematic analysis dengan software NVivo 11 plus. Terdapat 11 jurnal yang di dapatkan berdasarkan proses screening dan di review dalam literature ini. Hasil analisis di dapatkan 3 tema besar yaitu stressor of parenting in covid-19, parental stress and parenting stress, child abuse and child stress. Diperlukan dukungan kepada orang tua selama pandemi Covid-19 agar orang tua tidak mengalami stress dan memberikan pengasuhan positif bagi anak.

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 is a respiratory disease caused by SARS-Cov-2 with common symptoms of fever and cough.¹ This disease can cause acute pneumonia and death.² The spread of

Covid-19 has become a pandemic and has spread to more than 100 countries in a matter of weeks.³ Globally, 92,506,811 confirmed cases of covid-19 with a death toll of 2,001,773 cases.⁴ Covid-19 caused a global health emergency

which caused enormous losses to mankind, namely medical losses and economic losses.⁵

Washing hands properly, wearing masks, maintaining distance, avoiding crowds, maintaining room ventilation, coughing or sneezing effectively and locking down are measures that have been proven to be effective in preventing the transmission of Covid-19.^{6,8} Lockdowns have been imposed by various countries, very strict restrictions such as not going to school, working from home and quarantine areas with high cases.⁹ Lockdown has proven to be effective and has a significant impact on slowing down the growth of cases.¹⁰ Apart from reducing the number of spread of Covid-19, lockdowns and very strict restrictions have other impacts on the economy, social and psychology of the community.

Social isolation such as not leaving the house, travel restrictions, closing workplaces have an impact on the economy.^{9,11} The need for labor is reduced due to restrictions in each economic sector resulting in many individuals losing their jobs.¹¹ Loss of employment and income as well as financial uncertainty is felt especially for informal, low-skilled and unskilled workers due to disruption of the country's economic activities.¹² Individuals can experience stress due to economic instability, job loss, and economic tension.¹³

Stress and depression are psychological reactions found due to covid-19.⁹ Covid-19 results in fear of infection, anxiety when dealing with family members who have fever, fear of leaving the house afraid to meet many people.^{14,15} Lockdown can also affect a person's psychology such as stress and depression.¹⁶ Lockdown can increase negative emotions such as anxiety, sadness, fear, loneliness, irritability and frustration.¹⁴ Financial difficulties and job losses due to lockdown increase individual stress and depression.¹⁵ In addition to the impact of the lockdown on the economy, school closures and e-learning systems also increase stress and depression.

Various problems faced by students due to online learning are stress and depression,

finance due to distance learning, worries about bad signals and a home environment that does not support the learning process.^{17,18} Problems are also faced by parents due to school closures, where parents have the responsibility for day-to-day childcare and homeschooling.¹⁹ Parents also experience anxiety, stress and depression. Children who have to study at home and parents who spend a lot of time with their children can cause conflict and influence parents' emotions.²⁰ Psychological pressure on parents is due to financial instability, job loss, school closures, education for children, illness and caregiving burden.^{21,22}

One study reported the positive impact of lockdown on parent-child relationships. The availability of more free time, less work pressure is associated with better relationships between parents and children.¹⁴ However, other studies have shown that the mental health of parents due to COVID-19 affects the relationship between parents and children. Parents with higher stress levels tend to have conflict in relationships with children.²³ Child abuse increases due to the stress of parents who lose their jobs.²⁴ Parenting stress occurs in parents because parents need to carefully supervise their children and cannot work properly from home.²⁵ The impact of the crisis due to Covid-19 has also caused the inadequacy of children's needs such as cognitive and affective, safety and basic care from parents.²⁶

Research related parenting stress during the Covid pandemic has currently been carried out. However, there are no solid conclusions regarding this phenomenon. The conclusion regarding this phenomenon is very important, because the parenting by parents in the Covid-19 pandemic era will affect the welfare of the child going forward. Therefore, this literature review aims to synthesize the best available evidence about parenting stress during the COVID-19 pandemic era.

METHODS

Research findings, theory and practice carried out by a researcher on a topic are critically

analyzed, evaluated and synthesized.²⁷ The method used in this literature review is the Preferred Reporting Item for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) method. The results of the primary articles are summarized systematically for the purposes of using the PRISMA method. Literature review is carried out in 4 stages, namely:

Selection criteria

The literature study chosen for use in this literature review is based on inclusion criteria, namely full text, articles or journals in English, topics about parenting during the Covid-19 pandemic era and articles or journals for the last 2 years (2019-2021). The covid-19 case appeared at the end of 2019, therefore articles or journals taken from 2019 to the present should make the data obtained more valid. Non-original articles, only abstracts and journals that did not fit the required topic were not selected because they were the exclusion criteria in this study.

Information Source

Literature searches used databases of Pubmed (www.ncbi.nlm.gov/pubmed/), Ebsco (www.ebsco.com), ScienceDirect (www.sciencedirect.com) and Google Scholar (scholar.google.com/). The keywords used were "Parenting OR Parenting Style OR Parenting Practice AND Covid-19 OR Covid OR Corona Virus AND Pandemic". The results of the data obtained are Pubmed (N = 601), Ebsco (N = 33), ScienceDirect (N = 7,364) and Google Scholar (N = 3,000).

Screening

Screening was carried out based on language, year of publication and full text of 10,998 articles. There are 26 articles according to the title and abstract. After conducting a critical assessment of the journal's overall feasibility, 11 articles were included in this review literature. An overview of the literature selection process can be seen in Figure 1.

Data analysis

Thematic data analysis using NVivo with

NVivo 11 plus software is used in this review literature.

RESULTS

A Several studies have been conducted to explore the experience of girls in marriage. Results of the search identified 15 articles.^{5,7,11-23} The articles are from Jordan (1), Malaysia (1), Nepal (1), Niger & Ethiopia (2), Iran (3), Thailand & Myanmar (1), Ethiopia (1), Ethiopia & India (1), India (1), Bangladesh (3). In the 15 articles analysed, 5 main themes represent the condition of girls in dealing with marriage on the sexual aspect.

A review of 15 articles produced 5 main themes related to the sexual aspects of child marriage, as shown in Figure 3. The themes found have a relationship between one theme and another. This relationship can be seen from the word similarity shown in Table 2.

In the sexual aspect of girls who experience child marriage, the desire to have children soon has a close relationship with the obligation to have children with a correlation value of 0.846. Then followed by the link between the mental and physical unpreparedness of girls with the delay of having children (0.718), the desire to have children immediately with the fear of losing their husbands (0.594), the desire to have children immediately with the fertility of girls (0.581), and the obligation to have children with powerlessness to make reproductive health decisions (0.507).

RESULT

Journal screening begins by searching for journals in the database and with predetermined keywords. The results of the journal search obtained 10,998 journals. The reviewer then conducted a screening based on the title and abstract of 10,998 journals and obtained ²⁶ journals that were in accordance with the research to be carried out. The reviewer then reads the full text of 26 journals and gets 11 appropriate journals. These 11 journals are then reviewed by reviewers. The results of data analysis from 11 articles (Table 1) in this

literature review found that parenting stress during the Covid-19 pandemic were divided into 3 major themes, namely stressors of parenting in covid-19, parental stress and parenting stress, child abuse and child stress.

Stressor of parenting in covid-19

Journals 2, 6, 8 and 10 discuss the same thing, namely stressors that occur in parents during the covid-19 pandemic and affect their parenting. Stressors that often occur in parents in the Covid-19 pandemic are economic conditions, loss of work or income, loss of family or friends contact, relationship difficulties and fatigue. The lockdown policy implemented causes difficulties for parents such as dealing with children's boredom, difficulties in managing children's academics and difficulty managing homework. In addition, news about the Covid-19 virus, poor physical health, fear of contracting Covid-19, anxiety, personal and family health concerns, and lack of family support are stressors for childcare.^{28,31}

Parental Stress and Parenting Stress

Journals 2, 4, 5, 10 and 11 discuss the same thing regarding parental stress during Covid-19. Journals 3, 7 and 9 discuss the same thing regarding parenting stress. Stressors that must be faced by parents cause additional burden on parents, parental difficulties and cause stress on parents.^{23,29,30,32,33} Stress that occurs in parents causes parenting stress or parenting stress.^{31,33,36} Parenting pressure or parenting stress is related to negative parenting practices, negative parenting self-efficacy, parenting fatigue, and negative mother-child relationships, as well as poor quality of life for mothers.^{23,31,35,37}

Child abuse and child stress

Journals 1 and 6 discuss the same thing regarding child abuse by parents during the Covid-19 pandemic. Journals 10 and 11 discuss the same thing regarding child stress due to the treatment of their parents. Parental stress, parenting pressure and mother-child relationships lead to violent parenting and child

abuse during pandemic Covid-19.^{28,34} Parents strictly control the child, where the child must follow the wishes of the parents and be an indicator of toxicity to the child. Children experience harsh behavior and speech from their parents.³⁰ Emotional problems and children's behavior problems will be formed due to parents' dyadic and parental stress.³³

DISCUSSION

There are stressors for parents due to covid-19. Stressors that occur in parents due to COVID-19 caused stress to parents and affect their parenting patterns. Parenting stress can happen to parents during COVID-19 pandemic and lead to child abuse. Child abuse by parents against their children can cause children to experience stress. All articles in this literature review are from developed countries. Developed countries and developing countries affect parenting that occurs, especially in the field of socioeconomic. Developing countries are characterized as low-income countries.³⁸ Low social status has a significant relationship with negative parenting by parents.³⁹ While developed countries are countries with upper middle income.³⁸ However, people in developed countries are also experiencing economic instability due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Economic instability is one of the stressors that affects parenting during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, stressors that arise in parents due to the COVID-19 pandemic are anxiety, fear, difficulties in taking care of children and school at home.^{28,30} This is supported by research which reports that parents have to face challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely economic instability, the burden of care and stress.⁴⁰ Other studies have shown that parents also experience anxiety and depression due to Covid-19, economic hardship and children who go to school from home.^{20,41,42} Covid-19 also causes food insecurity for families.⁴³

Anxiety, depression and difficulty sleeping that are felt by parents due to covid-19 cause stress on parents.²⁸ Parental stress also occurs due to distance learning in children and provisions

to stay at home which lead to increased time with family members.⁴⁴ Lockdowns and school closings increase the responsibility of parents to look after the household, cook for the family, take care of children, work from home and accompany children to study at home.^{33,37,44} Parents are not able to work well because they have to carefully accompany their children to learn, causing stress to parents.²⁵ Psychological distress occurs significantly due to covid-19.³⁶ Other studies have shown parents experience psychological stress due to financial instability, school closures and educational responsibilities for children.²¹

Parental stress causes household chaos.³³ Stress in parents also affects the care they do. Parenting stress occurs due to covid-19, lockdown and parental stress.³¹ Fatigue and decreased parenting satisfaction are also parenting stresses that occur in parents.^{23,37} Psychological pressure on parents causes fatigue of parenting.³⁷ Other studies have shown that increasing parental stress increases parenting fatigue.⁴⁵ More childcare fatigue is experienced by women because of a higher burden.^{37,46} Parents feel tired to spend time with their children. Parental fatigue leads to a lack of parental involvement in their children's lives and creates emotional distance.³⁷

Women also experience a higher childcare burden.⁴⁷ Mothers experience a period where there are changes in routine and closeness to family.⁴⁸ The burden of parenting increases due to work at home and children learning from home.²³ Mothers with higher stress levels tend to attribute their negative emotions to children.⁴⁹

The impact of covid-19 on people causes child neglect. The results of a study show that job loss in parents due to covid-19 leads to abuse and physical abuse in children.²⁴ Parenting pressure during Covid-19 affects the relationship between parents and children and abusive parenting.³⁴ Children must study at home, and parents spend more time with children, the child's behavior may not meet the requirements of these parents, which can lead to conflict and affect parents' emotions.²⁰ Other studies have

shown that parents miss regular parenting. Parents experience worsening mental health due to Covid-19 and affect the mental health of children.⁴³

The results of the reviewer's analysis, the Covid-19 pandemic has a negative impact on the parenting process. Covid-19 causes stressors that can cause stress to parents. Stress experienced by parents is positively related to the stress of parenting they do and has an impact on children. Children experience abuse from their parents such as violence and neglect. Children also experience stress due to parenting stress.

Ways that can be done to reduce parenting stress and its negative impact parents must have adaptive coping. Parents who have been negatively affected by COVID-19 must be able to accept and adapt to the conditions they are experiencing. Adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic can reduce the level of anxiety and fear experienced by parents and have a positive impact on reducing parenting stress. Parents who view covid-19 from a positive side such as the impact of covid-19 being able to gather with family in one house can reduce the stress that mothers experience.⁴⁹

Stress management can be done to reduce stress that occurs in parents. Parents and children can do fun activities at home to reduce stress such as watching movies together or doing physical activities together. Family support is also needed to reduce parenting stress. The contribution of families, especially spouses, in caring for children can reduce parenting stress.

CONCLUSION

Themes of particular concern in this paper are stressors of parenting in covid-19, parental stress and parenting stress, child abuse and child stress. Adaptive coping, stress management and family support are needed for parents during the Covid-19 pandemic so that parents do not experience stress and provide positive care for their children.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There are no conflict of interest

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

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