

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO IMPROVE HEALTH INFORMATION DISSEMINATION (A STUDY IN DAYUN SUBDISTRICT, SIAK REGENCY)

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Abstract

This study aims to develop strategic health communication interventions tailored specifically to the socio cultural context of Kecamatan Dayun. The main goal is to empower local communities by improving access to health related information and reducing health disparities through participatory approaches. It will explore various communication channels, including face-to-face interactions, mass media, and digital platforms, Using a communication strategy framework, the research focuses on interventions that bridge these gaps and promote equitable health access. A qualitative method was employed, including semi-structured interviews with 7 informants using snowball sampling. The study emphasizes the importance of an integrated communication strategy that involves planning, implementation, and evaluation. It recommends strategies to improve health information distribution in Kecamatan Dayun. First, strengthen collaboration between the Health Officer, local health workers, and community leaders to ensure culturally appropriate messaging. Second, enhance the capacity of health Kader and workers through ongoing training in communication and technology to better reach the community. Third, prioritize the development of accessible information exchange points, such as health information centers or digital platforms. Lastly, a participatory approach should be adopted, and regular evaluations should be carried out to adjust the strategy based on community feedback and evolving health needs.

Keywords: Communication Health, Strategy, Dayun

INTRODUCTION

Health communication is a critical component of public health that plays a central role in improving individual and community well-being. Effective health communication helps raise awareness about health issues, promotes positive health behaviors, and facilitates access to healthcare services. However, the equitable distribution of health communication remains a pressing challenge, particularly in regions with limited access to communication infrastructure and resources. Kecamatan Dayun in Kabupaten Siak serves as an example of such an area where geographical, socio-economic,

and infrastructural barriers hinder the dissemination of essential health information.

In many rural areas like Kecamatan Dayun, access to health information is often restricted by factors such as inadequate telecommunications infrastructure, limited availability of healthcare facilities, and poor literacy rates. These constraints exacerbate the existing gap in health literacy, making it difficult for residents to access preventive care, understand critical health risks, or adhere to treatment recommendations. As a result, these limitations can contribute to poorer health outcomes, increased disease burdens, and higher levels of health inequality. The absence of reliable and comprehensive communication channels also hampers community engagement, making it challenging to implement effective public health initiatives that require active participation from residents.

Herlambang et al. (2022) in *Basics of Health Communication* recognize health communication as a crucial component that not only conveys information but also influences community behavior toward healthier lifestyles. Beyond merely disseminating information, health communication plays a vital role in shaping public attitudes, perceptions, and social norms related to health issues. Its primary objectives include promoting health, preventing disease, and supporting the public's understanding of relevant health policies and regulations. In practice, health communication employs a range of approaches interpersonal communication, mass communication, and digital media to reach broader and more effective audiences. With advancements in communication technology, health communication has become increasingly essential in fostering healthy behaviors within communities.

Several previous studies highlight the importance of adapting communication strategies to the unique needs and characteristics of communities to improve the effectiveness of health information delivery. Saifuddin (2021) in "Health Communication Strategies in Addressing COVID-19 at Belang-Belang Mamuju Steam Power Plant" reveals that disseminating COVID-19 health information via media such as leaflets and direct communication effectively enhances understanding within the workplace. Distinct from previous studies, the present research aims not only to utilize print media but also to integrate digital platforms, such as WhatsApp and Instagram, to expand the reach of health messages. This study seeks to examine how a combination of print, digital, and face-to-face channels can effectively address the communication needs of the community in Kecamatan Dayun, particularly within remote contexts. This approach strives to ensure that health messages are not only received but also thoroughly understood and implemented within the community.

Irwan and Faustyna (2023) in "Health Communication Strategies for Accelerating Stunting Reduction in Lubuk Pakam, Deli Serdang" demonstrate that interpersonal communication through direct dialogue is highly effective

in enhancing community understanding of the stunting reduction program. In contrast, this study focuses on utilizing local community leaders and health cadres as intermediaries in interpersonal communication. By actively engaging these figures, the current research aims to build stronger trust between the community and healthcare providers, facilitating the acceptance and application of health information within Kecamatan Dayun.

Rakhmaniar (2021) in "Government Communication Strategies in Handling COVID-19 in Indonesia" emphasizes the necessity of coordinated health campaigns involving multiple stakeholders. However, this research diverges in that it will explore how cross-sector collaboration, including the roles of village officials, religious leaders, and health cadres, can be effectively implemented in smaller local settings, such as Kecamatan Dayun. Additionally, this study will investigate the integration of digital media to complement face-to-face communication approaches, aiming to ensure that health messages are more effectively received by the broader community through diverse, targeted communication channels.

In the context of this study, health communication strategies encompass three fundamental components: planning, implementation, and evaluation. According to Widyastuti (2021) in *Integrated Marketing Communication Management*, effective planning involves defining clear communication goals, identifying the target audience, and selecting appropriate channels for delivering messages. Implementation refers to the consistent and effective delivery of health messages through various channels, including print and digital media. Evaluation is a critical step to assess the effectiveness of the employed communication strategies, allowing for adjustments based on feedback received from the community.

This study seeks to develop strategic health communication interventions tailored specifically to the socio-cultural context of Kecamatan Dayun. The overarching goal is to empower local communities by improving access to health-related information and reducing health disparities through participatory approaches. It will explore various communication channels, including face-to-face interactions, mass media, and digital platforms, to ensure that health messages are not only received but also understood and acted upon by target populations. Policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and community leaders can benefit from the insights generated by this research, ultimately leading to a more equitable and inclusive health communication system within Kabupaten Siak and similar regions.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative approach to explore social phenomena related to health information gaps in Kabupaten Siak, particularly in Kecamatan Dayun. According to Moleong (2017), this approach allows researchers to delve into the subjects' experiences holistically and describe the findings

narratively. Additionally, Creswell (2018) highlight that this method is useful for exploring the meaning of individual and group behaviors within the context of social issues. A qualitative method was employed, including communication asset mapping and semi structured interviews with 7 informants using snowball. Health information policies face obstacles due to communication strategies lacking adequate planning, implementation, and evaluation. Healthcare providers struggle to reach remote communities, and the community expressed dissatisfaction with uneven access to health information, requesting more credible healthcare workers. The research is conducted in Kecamatan Dayun, Kabupaten Siak, selected due to its disparities in health resource distribution. The study takes place over a period of six months, from June to November 2024. The subjects of the study include representatives from the Siak Regency Health Officer, local healthcare providers, and residents of Kecamatan Dayun.

Table 1.1 Data Informan

No	Informant (s)	Occupation
1	Dwi Ayu Mutia	Promkes Dayun
2	Resmaneti	Ketua Pengaduan
3	Diah Hardianti	Kader Posyandu Asparagus
4	Nurl Eli Yasmi	Kader Posyandu Intan Payung
6	Mega	Dinas Kesehatan
7	Nani	Civilians

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explore communication strategies that can enhance the distribution of health communication in Kecamatan Dayun, Kabupaten Siak, which has limited communication access. The research findings indicate that utilizing various communication channels, including print and digital media, as well as the role of health cadres, is crucial for effectively reaching the community. Puskesmas Dayun has implemented communication strategies

involving the establishment of health cadres. Dwi Ayu Mutia, the Health Promotion Officer at Puskesmas Dayun, emphasizes that

"the formation of Kader is one of the main strategies implemented by the health center to ensure that health messages can effectively reach the community."

Health Kader act as a bridge between the health center and the community, explaining various health programs, educating the public, and gathering feedback regarding health issues faced by residents. In the context of communication strategy, the book *Basics of Health Communication* by Herlambang et al. (2022) explains that careful communication planning, the selection of appropriate communication channels, and tailoring messages to audience needs are crucial for achieving health communication goals. Puskesmas Dayun demonstrates the ability to plan and execute targeted communication strategies, as evidenced by their efforts to build good relationships with the community through health cadres who originate from the community itself. These cadres have a better understanding of the local culture and customs, enabling them to convey health information in a relevant and acceptable manner.

The Kabupaten Siak Health Officer also plays an important role in supporting this communication strategy. Mega Syahrina, Health Promotion Officer at the Kabupaten Siak Health Office, explains that

"health information is delivered directly to the community or forwarded to the health center."

This indicates a structured communication system, where information is cascaded from the Health Office to the health center, then conveyed to the community. Important programs implemented by the Health Office, such as the Clean and Healthy Living Movement and outreach about people with mental disorders (ODGJ), are designed to increase health awareness among the public. Health information is also disseminated in the form of leaflets, posters, billboards, and banners placed in strategic locations to ensure that health messages are accessible to all community members. The use of digital technology by Puskesmas Dayun is also an integral part of their communication strategy. The health center actively utilizes social media platforms, particularly Instagram, to disseminate health information quickly and efficiently. Resmaneti, the Complaint Head at Puskesmas Dayun :

"We have provided a suggestion box at the health center, and we are also actively managing our Instagram account to interact with the community and address their health concerns."

The use of Instagram allows the health center to reach younger generations and a wider audience, while also strengthening community engagement in health programs. Community members can access up-to-date information

about health programs, health center activities, and other important news simply by following the official health center account. Health cadres also serve as effective communication channels by utilizing instant messaging applications like WhatsApp. This facilitates health cadres in reminding the community about immunizations, health outreach, or other activities. The use of this technology creates more direct and responsive communication channels, allowing the community to feel more involved in the health programs offered.

Additionally, Dwi Ayu Mutia notes that :

"the understanding of the community varies; there are also cases where some individuals are hesitant to get vaccinated because they believe the vaccine is not halal. To address this, we usually approach religious leaders or village heads to provide education."

This illustrates that Puskesmas Dayun employs a cultural approach as a health communication strategy. However, challenges remain. The quality of information provided by health cadres still needs improvement. Based on community feedback, some residents feel that health cadres do not possess sufficient in-depth knowledge on health topics. Most cadres are not professional healthcare workers, so when community members have more specific questions, sometimes the cadres cannot provide adequate answers. Vina, one of the informants, states :

"The chosen cadres should have a medical background so that the information conveyed is more trustworthy."

On the other hand, Mega Syahrina also highlights challenges in the distribution of information from the Health Office. Although health information policies are communicated, there is not always a strict monitoring and evaluation mechanism in place for implementation in the field. This leads to potential gaps in the communication flow, where information may not be conveyed or understood properly by the community. Furthermore, the results indicate that the community relies heavily on health cadres for obtaining health information. Nur Eli Yasmi, a cadre from Posyandu Intan Payung, emphasizes:

"We carry out our duties according to the instructions from the health center and gather issues from the community to be reported back to the health center."

This shows that the role of cadres is not only to disseminate information but also to act as a link to convey the aspirations and needs of the community to the health center. The importance of communication in the context of health cannot be overlooked. As stated in the book *Integrated Marketing Communication Management* by Widyastuti (2021), effective communication includes planning, implementation, and evaluation to achieve target audiences. Puskesmas Dayun has taken positive steps in adopting technology and communication strategies involving cadres, but it is essential

to enhance the quality of training for cadres and ensure that the information provided is accurate and evidence-based.

Thus, despite the challenges in implementation, the efforts made by Puskesmas Dayun to improve the distribution of health communication through various channels, the involvement of cadres, and the use of technology demonstrate significant potential for enhancing community health in Kecamatan Dayun. By continually strengthening communication and the information provided to the community, it is hoped that a healthier and better-informed society will emerge.

CONCLUSION

This study examines health communication in Kecamatan Dayun, focusing on strategies to improve information distribution. The Health Officer is responsible for policy making and disseminating health information through community health centers (Puskesmas). However, the lack of monitoring and evaluation highlights gaps in overseeing the effectiveness of health programs. Puskesmas and health Kader are crucial in linking the community to health information. They use digital tools such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and Instagram to spread information, while health cadres also rely on traditional methods like community meetings. However, limited access to digital technology and gaps in health Kader's knowledge mean that information is not always accurate or widely accessible, particularly in remote areas. Despite a well structured information network, geographic and infrastructure challenges hinder the effective distribution of information. Additionally, the lack of proper training for health Kader affects the quality of the information shared. To improve health communication, the Health Officer should enhance monitoring and evaluation of health programs to ensure the information being shared is consistent with established standards. Health kader require continuous training, especially in communication skills and health topics, to ensure the information they provide is accurate and effective. Given technological limitations, providing adequate devices and support for better access to digital platforms is crucial.

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