

## Leukemia and Its Impacts on the Quality of Life of a Child: A Case Study

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The purpose of this study was to allow a leukemia patient to describe their health related quality of life (HRQoL) in their own words, in order psychologists could understand the impact that leukemia has on children. Four semistructured interview questions guide the interviews. Each question related to a domain identified in previous researches as having an effect on HRQoL. Areas explored were (a) physical well-being and symptoms, (b) psychological well-being, (c) social well-being, and (d) functional well-being. Five themes were identified: (a) fatigue, (b) the effect on activities, (c) medication and treatment effects, (d) relationship changes, and (e) hair loss. In addition, based on content analysis, the result showed that there is an interactive effect between the diseases and the level of QoL. The results reveal that the social, physical and emotional health and well-being of children with acute lymphocytic leukemia (ALL) is significantly poorer than their community-based peers.

*Key words:* children, cancer, acute lymphocytic leukemia.

Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menuntun penyandang leukemia limfositik akut mendeskripsikan kualitas hidupnya yang terkait kesehatan dengan kata-katanya sendiri, agar para psikolog dapat memahami dampak leukemia pada anak. Wawancara dipandu empat pertanyaan interviu semistruktur. Tiap pertanyaan terkait ranah yang teridentifikasi penelitian terdahulu memiliki dampak pada kualitas hidup terkait kesehatan. Wilayah yang dieksplorasi adalah (a) kesejahteraan dan gejala fisik, (b) kesejahteraan psikologis, (c) kesejahteraan sosial, (d) kesejahteraan fungsional. Ditengarai lima tema: (a) kelelahan, (b) akibat pada aktivitas, (c) akibat pengobatan dan perawatan, (d) perubahan hubungan, (e) kehilangan rambut. Selain itu, berdasarkan analisis isi, hasil menunjukkan bahwa terdapat akibat interaktif antara penyakit dan tingkat kualitas hidup. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa kesehatan sosial, fisik dan emosi, serta kesejahteraan anak penyandang leukemia limfositik akut lebih rendah secara bermakna daripada teman sebayanya di masyarakat

*Kata kunci:* anak, kanker, leukemia limfositik akut.

In Indonesia there has been an epidemiological and demographic transition in the health field regarding diseases. If two decades ago the main focus of health problems is communicable diseases, currently the focus has shifted to non-communicable diseases. The change of lifestyle, environmental conditions, as well as disease patterns and interactions between these factors has led to increased incidence and prevalence of non-communicable diseases. One of the non-communicable diseases which increase in prevalence over time and lead to increased mortality in some countries in the world is cancer, including Indonesia.

Cancer is a disease caused by abnormal and uncontrollable mutation of body cells that affect bodily functions. Cancer that afflicts children is relatively rare when compared

to cancer that afflicts adults, though it is estimated that 130 children from 1 million children in the world, at 0-14 years of age, are suffering from cancer (Keene, 1999). In general there are several types of cancer that affects children, such as blood cancers (leukemia), brain cancer, eye cancer (retinoblastoma), lymph node cancer, cancer of the nervous system, muscular cancer, endocrine gland cancer, and bone cancer. Of the many types of existing cancers, leukemia is the most common cancer among children.

On the one hand, there is indeed a potential cure of cancer among children, but on the other hand, children have to face various challenges that are not easy. Children with cancer must not only face developmental tasks and growths as children who do not have cancer, but also must cope with the impacts of the cancer they have (Belson, Kingsley, & Holmes, 2007). Belson, et al. showed that a child who has been declared cancer experienced acute stress, pain, fever, headache, flu, and feeling disgusted with the healing process

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