



# COVID-19 HEALING METHOD OF COVID-19 TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN THE VIEW OF SCIENTIST-SANTRI MEDICINE PRACTITIONERS

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#### Abstract

This paper aims to understand and analyze the handling and treatment and treatment of Covid-19 in Indonesia according to traditional healing practitioners in Java. The spread of the Covid-19 virus has hit Indonesia since March 2020. The spread of the Covid-19 virus is very troubling, and even inhibits and totally paralyzes all community activities, ranging from the economy, education to work, and others. This study uses qualitative methods and field observations in the form of conducting in-person interviews with several healing practitioners in Java, especially in Yogyakarta related to their views or perspectives on the virus and Covid-19 drugs. The results showed that traditional healing practitioners in Java used several herbs that they thought were able to overcome or be used as Covid-19 drugs. The herb is in the form of spices, plants, and some folk remedies from the ancestors. They are trying to offer a cure for Covid-19 by returning to back to nature. In addition, they also try to rationalize the pain that occurs when the human body's immunity decreases or energy is unbalanced, is the result of violations of natural laws by humans themselves.

#### A. INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, it became a new historical record for the citizens of the world. The Corona or Covid-19 attack that first appeared in Wuhan, China, continues to infect many people. (Umam, 2021). The disease is named Coronavirus Diseases 2019 (COVID-19). Based on the official website of the Government of the Republic of Indonesian, https://covid19.go.id/peta-sebaran, As of July 19, 2020, the virus, which the World Health Organization (WHO) named Severa Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus-2, has spread widely. There were 4,143 deaths out of 86,521 people with confirmed status (Satgas Covid, 2019). Until now, there is no medicine that can be used to cure the disease, but efforts to cure people with confirmed status are only based on aspects of maintaining body immunity, fulfilling adequate nutrition, and maintaining a hygienic environment (Margarini & Anindita, 2022).

So, does the Covid-19 medicine not exist yet? Isn't there a variety of natural medicines that can be used to cure this deadly disease? Aren't healing practitioners also known among Indonesians who are usually visited by many with various diseases? Historically, the case of healing diseases in Indonesia began with herbal methods (Mawardika & Istiqomah, 2021). Medicines are created by healing practitioners in the form of potions, herbs, and spices (Kusumo et al., 2020), and prayers in particular. Various herbs are used and processed to treat certain ailments.

However, not all plants can be used for all diseases. For example, krastoelang is a wild plant that grows in Java. It is usually used to treat venereal diseases and fever. To date, the use of herbal medicines is still ongoing in Indonesia. Alongside healing techniques such as scraping, massage, herbal medicine, and massage. There is one other healing technique that is usually only mastered by traditional medicine practitioners (Hasyim et al., 2020). Both by involving natural medicines and supernatural abilities. For example, the appeal of a Sufi figure who is the President of the World Sufi Ulama who is a murshid of the Tarekat Syadziliyah (Mudlofar, 2020), Habib Muhammad Luthfi Bin Yahya, in Pekalongan (Azis, 2020). When Covid-19 was confirmed to have entered Indonesia, he suggested that Indonesians eat three shallots and recite certain prayers (sholawat).

The practitioners of supernatural healing (Sunardi & Sujito, 2019) in Java are usually referred to by the local community as shamans, abah, mbah, kyai. They live in the midst of society as figures who are often asked for help for various diseases. In addition, they are also usually asked for help for various purposes. During the Covid-19 attack, it is important to listen to the perspectives of these supernatural healing practitioners. People still refer to them as an effort to cure various diseases, especially in the atmosphere of the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, as mentioned above, the Covid-19 cure to this day has not been found. The effort to explore the treasures of

This research is important to study to answer the main question of why these traditional healing practitioners choose these drugs to treat Covid-19 and how they view Covid-19. In addition, this research will contribute to the discourse of traditional healing in Indonesia, especially the healing and prevention of Covid-19 from the perspective of local cultural treasures in the Java region.

#### B. METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with observation and interview methods. (Moleong, 2018). The researcher went directly to the field to visit practitioners of traditional healing in Java. Then, we conducted interviews with the practitioners, their patients and the surrounding community. We also approached scientists or scientific authorities in the field of medicine and interviewed them as well. The interviews were conducted in a loose and measured manner. In addition to observations and interviews, data will also be obtained by literature review and observations on the internet, especially on social media sites such as YouTube, which contain quite a lot of material related to the treatment. (Moleong, 2018).

The research location was chosen in the Special Region of Yogyakarta. The selection of this location was based on the consideration of Yogyakarta as a city that is still synonymous with the preservation of traditional culture. A brief search of the research team also showed a considerable distribution of traditional healing practitioners. Whether in the Yogyakarta City area, or in several other districts. In addition, in a pandemic situation, the selection of Yogyakarta was also determined considering that several areas around Yogyakarta are included in the red zone and black zone status. (Satgas Covid, 2019).

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 1. The Healing in Indonesia

The history of healing in Indonesia began with herbal healing methods in the form of concoctions known as jamu. Indigenous people used plant products to treat illnesses, such as diarrhea. However, not all types of plants can be used as medicinal ingredients. Among the plants that could be used as medicine in 1825 was the krastoelang plant, a wild plant found on the island of Java (Jaelani, 2019). Krastoelang is a type of plant used as a medicine for venereal diseases, and to a certain extent it is also believed to treat fever.

Until now, the use of herbal medicines is still ongoing in Indonesia. For example, traditional medicine in Indonesia, such as scraping, massage, jamu, and massage are still trusted by some people in healing some diseases. Although its existence continues to compete with medicines produced from European knowledge (medicines derived from modern medicine).

During the New Order era, the development of herbal medicine made significant progress. Indonesian people were increasingly interested in Islamic medicine known as thibbun nabawi. The term thibbun nabawi became increasingly popular after the New Order. Ibn Qayyim Al Jauziah is one of the scientists in the field of thibbun Nabawi (Al Jauziah, 2005). In his research, Al Jauziah discusses how to treat various diseases using the Prophet's treatment methods. The treatment method is Islamic herbal medicine, such as ruqyah and cupping (hijamah) (Ahmad et al., 2019). Treatment using the ruqyah method is an Islamic treatment using jampi (recitation of Quranic verses). Some Islamic scholars are of the opinion that the Quran, in addition to being able to treat spiritual illnesses, can also cure physical illnesses. (Pedak, 2010, pp. 20-52). In recent years, the practice of rugyah treatment has begun to mushroom in various major cities in Indonesia (Irkani, 2019). The existence of ruqyah has been appreciated by Indonesian Muslims (Triantoro, 2019, pp. 461–469).

In the early days, Islamic and traditional medicine was disseminated through places of study, majlis, and mosques (Pedak, 2010, pp. 461-462), such as rugyah treatment, cupping or hijamah (Tambusai, 2013, p. 22). This cupping treatment method involves injuring a part of the patient's body, such as the head or back, to remove dirty blood. One of the purposes of this cupping treatment is believed to improve blood circulation.

#### 2. The progress of healing in Java

The social phenomenon of belief in Indonesian society is diverse, especially in Java. Javanese culture, which is still classified as acculturative with its syncretic religion, consists of several sub-cultures, such as abangan, santri, and priayi (Geertz, 1981). This is similar to Clifford Geertz's study on how Islam is practiced in Java, where he saw the merging of local practices (shamanic practices) with Islamic practices. This practice is usually carried out by some rural communities, such as selametan, belief in spirits, as well as medical techniques and shamanic practices that are in contact with Islam.

In fact, Geertz describes medicine as one of the main aspects of what he considers to be a form of religious belief in Java that is still kejawen in nature. In contrast to Geertz's research, Mark R. Woodward sees that healing in Java is inseparable from the pluralism of medical treatment and treatment rituals of the Hindu-Javanese religious tradition. Woodward describes that there are two concepts of healing in Java (Woodward, 2010). First, healing rooted in the Sufi concept of the Wali sanctity which is based on the mystical concept of diagnosing illness based on the Wali. Secondly, treatment with shamanic concepts that involve the use of magical powers or the help of jin and supernatural beings. This explains that some Javanese people still believe in the treatment and healing of health to shamans and Guardians.

Woodward and Timothy Daniels argue that most of these healers reject the claim of being shamans. They refer to themselves as 'helpers' or 'experts in Javanese science', and even as 'alternative medicine practitioners'. It is not uncommon for them to refer to themselves as Ustadz who practice healing based on Islamic law. Javanese cultural expression with Islam (Kamal, 2017), especially healing in Indonesia has a significant relationship and finds its identity (Bayu Wahyono, 2001, p. 45).

In Java, there are several kinds of shamans, such as baby shamans, susuk shamans, japa shamans (healers who rely on mantras), jampi shamans (healers who use various kinds of plants in performing treatment), and others. However, they usually practice various types of shamanism; they can be any kind of shaman, except for baby shamans (Geertz, 1981). Some people consider it dangerous to be a shaman, because they have extraordinary powers as tools in healing, capable of destroying themselves if they are not spiritually strong. Although the ability to become a shaman is inherited, some of their skills are acquired through study. Their learning tends to emphasize ascetic discipline, long fasts, and debilitating meditation for long periods of time, or they learn from other shamans. However, they consider that the skills they acquire are of spiritual origin to cleanse the heart and mind.

In researching Islam in Java, Woodward did not find elements of Hinduism and Buddhism in Javanese mysticism. However, he found Javanese mysticism in the fields of religion and medicine that have similarities with the Parsi tradition of Islamic Sufism. This shows that Javanese Islam is a new genre that developed significantly. Woodward also sees that part of the symbols of Islam have entered the practice of medicine in Java, including treatment by shamans.

Recently, the reputation of traditional healers has weakened due to the proliferation of alternative treatments that are easily found and developed in Java and other areas. These alternative treatments are both rooted in local traditions (herbs, shamans, etc.) and Islamic ones (cupping and ruqyah). Timothy Daniels divides the three types of healing that developed in Java, namely healing by shamans, kyai, and ustadz (Sila, 2011). Daniels looks at how local Muslim practices fit within the more complex spectrum of Islam in Java, focusing on Muslim healers such as shamans, kyai, and ustadz who claim to heal with Islamic methods (Daniels, 2009).

The shamanic healing referred to by Daniels is a method of healing using unclear mantras (sometimes using Quranic verses that are believed to be an antidote to disease and other dangers). Meanwhile, treatment by kyai is an alternative medicine method that uses the science of tauhid, which has similarities with the ruqyah method (Rahman, 2018). This treatment by kyai is usually seen in Islamic boarding schools. (Suprobo, 2019). Next, healing by Ustadz referred to by Daniels is healing that is based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, and tries to avoid mystical healing (Daniels, 2009).

In general, it has something in common with the Javanese tradition which is still thick and syncretic (Rostiyati, 2010). Their concepts of healing are similar to those of abangan, santri, and priayi. However, although the healing they do is kejawen, they oppose being categorized as local healing methods. The local healing is a combination of Islamic healing practices and practices that have shirk or use magic (Geertz, 1981, pp. 116–123).

Jajang Jahroni discusses the political economy in the field of Salafi-focused Islamic medicine (Jahroni, 2015, pp. 9–14). In his research, Jahroni sees Salafis producing medicine and marketing it to Muslims. The Salafis legitimize their products (medicine) as Islamic based on the Quran and Sunnah, so the Salafis benefit financially through the marketing of medicine which creates a political economy of Islamic healing.

Based on observations of several healing practitioners in Java related to the Covid-19 medicine conducted to several resource persons, researchers found that the methods used by practitioners were different. Some of them offer their patients the Covid-19 medicine in the form of a liquid that they call a healthy drink containing honey, mangosteen peel, and several other ingredients that are believed to be able to help increase one's body immunity (Wawancara, 2020).

In addition to offering healthy drinks for Covid-19 transmission, some healing practitioners in Java also offer necklaces as an antidote to the spread of the Covid-19 virus. (Wawancara, 2020). The necklace is made of tin which is then assembled with several Indonesian spices. The spices consist of red ginger, kencur, and cinnamon. These spices are also believed to be able to increase the body's immunity and provide aroma therapy. By using the necklace, it is indirectly believed to be able to create a calm atmosphere and mind, so that someone is not easily depressed. They believe that good thoughts and prejudices will have a significant effect on the health of the body.

Instead, it proves that religiosity is highly dependent on what they (the healing practitioners) create, among which refers to the goods or products being promoted.

These activities not only support and propagate a certain discourse, they also constitute religious consumptiveness in the economic sphere through healing.

## 3. Covid-19 and its Treatment: A Traditional Healing Perspective in Java

Herbal medicine craftsmen in Indonesia are very diverse, ranging from academics, practitioners, producers to several other discussion forums trying to create various medicinal herbs to treat diseases. During the Covid-19 pandemic, various herbal medicines to deal with the Covid-19 virus that is sweeping Indonesia and even the world, the emergence of herbal medicines is increasingly mushrooming in Indonesia. Some traditional healing practitioners in Java are also secure with their claims regarding Covid-19 healing drugs. In this chapter, the author explores several perspectives of Javanese traditional healing practitioners regarding the Covid-19 drug. The author narrates several traditional treatments for Covid-19 according to Javanese practitioners who are believed to be able to overcome the Corona virus that attacks a person's body. In addition to narrating the Covid-19 cure, this chapter also explores the Javanese healing practitioners' views on Covid-19.

For humans, health is the main gift in life. With maximum health, humans will be able to live life well. Because, basically the human body consists of two things, namely physical and non-physical. If both are healthy, then humans can be said to be healthy as a whole. Some of these healing practitioners in Java open clinics for general disease consultation. In general, they offer herbalist and traditional treatments. This herbalist medicine is a concoction or self-made medicine derived from plants and spices.

In addition, some of the treatment clinics in this area of Java serve as an institution that excels in the field of self-empowerment. They also offer excellent health services and are able to provide value-added solutions to their patients. For example, one of the treatment clinics in Gamping area, to overcome the spread of Covid-19, they developed innovative quality herbal products based on research and trials of typical Middle Eastern medicine.

Some of the healing practitioners in Java claim that the cause of a person being infected with Covid-19 is due to the human body's decreased immunity (unbalanced energy). This is due to the violation of natural laws by humans themselves (Wawancara, 2020). In this digital era, there are many health tips that are initially spread by word of mouth to be easily found online. Regarding health tips that are spread by word of mouth and cyberspace, you should not accept the info raw. Because, it will actually have a negative impact. For this reason, traditional healing practitioners in Java provide several solutions, such as herbal products, healthy homes for consultation on various diseases research and development, Wellness class, merchandise, one day holistic healing, and other activity.

The herbal products they offer to overcome Covid-19 are in the form of honey, healthy drinks, herbal capsules, and several spices or other herbal products that are made into health necklaces. The necklace in question serves as a health therapy for patients infected with Covid-19. Based on the author's findings in the field, their patients come from different ideologies and circles, ranging from officials, employees, laborers, farmers, traders, and others. The patients are not only from the elderly and adult level, but also from the child level. These patients believe that this traditional treatment is relatively cheaper than medical treatment. In addition, Javanese people, in particular, still believe in traditional medicine from shamans, healers, and other healing practitioners who are still kejawen and syncretic in nature.

The fame of these practitioners in the Java area with their healing ideas in print media and Youtube is able to attract the attention of people from various religious circles. Although they do not have a strong basis in religious education like other healers. In fact, their practices look like Islamic shaman practices. The treatment practices they carry out are syncretic, they start with reading basmallah, alfatihah, sholawat to reading other verses of the Koran. Furthermore, they do the recitation without a clear voice. They combine the recitation of the Quran with mantras and incantations whose meaning is unclear.

Based on findings in the field, to overcome the Corona virus, Gus Tanto offers his patients Covid-19 medicine in the form of herbal supplements containing B 8, B 14, B16, B 10+. Bio 8 contains honey, propolis, prebiotics and probiotics, mangosteen peel, soursop and several other fermented ingredients. ingredients will be in the form of a liquid that is believed to be able to help increase one's body immunity. Gus Tanto calls it a healthy drink as a solution to various diseases. Bio 8 is believed to be able to increase immunity to overcome the Corona virus that attacks a person's body.

A part from Gus Tanto, there are several psychics from East Java trying to find a cure to cure the Corona virus pandemic. Curing this virus pandemic through rituals carried out in the forest, caves, and fasting ngebleng (fasting without eating and drinking for at least three days and three nights). By performing these rituals, they claim to get whispers and wangsit (messages in the form of supernatural mandates), there are several normals from East Java who are trying to find a cure for the corona virus pandemic.

First, Ki Sabdo Langit is one of the psychics from Surabaya, he performed a ritual in a room, and claimed to get a real appearance that the Covid-19 virus could be cured with snails and kepok banana. Through his narrative, he said that he utilized snail slime in his mouth and avoided the back of the snail. Because the back of the snail contains a dangerous poison. The slime from the snail is what can kill the

Corona virus. Furthermore, the slime from this snail is eaten raw and accompanied by kepok banana.

Second, Mbah Bas, a spiritualist from Mojokerto who has practiced spirituality in a cave in Pacet, East Java. According to Mbah Bas, the effort made to overcome the Corona virus outbreak is by smoking. This is because cigarettes contain nicotine which is believed to be able to inhibit the attack of the Corona virus on the body.

Third, Mbah Wanto is a psychic from Sidoarjo. This psychic from Sidoarjo claims that the medicine to treat the Corona virus outbreak is red betel leaf. The processing of betel leaves is by boiling two betel leaves with 500 ml of water. Then, when boiling the betel leaves, the water is allowed to shrink to 250 ml. The efficacy of water from this betel leaf decoction is then drunk which is believed to be able to overcome the Corona virus that attacks a person's body.

Fourth, Gus Fauzy, one of the thoriqoh practitioners from Porong, Sidoarjo. Gus Fauzy openly revealed the results of his ritual. The results of this ritual from Gus Fauzy are related to his confession of meeting with supernatural beings who gave him instructions for the formulation to destroy the Corona virus. The formula for destroying the Corona virus is by using red onions that are crushed as many as 7 seeds. Then, the crushed shallots are boiled with 2 cups of water. When boiled, it is left until it becomes 1 glass. The rule of drinking this shallot boiled water in the morning and evening.

In practice, they do not use or explain clear proofs when practicing healing to patients. However, they are very critical of practices that are not Islamic or based on the Quran and Sunnah, thus considering other practices as shamanic practices. In fact, the reality on the ground is very much different from the opinion of traditional healing that has developed in the community.

### D. CONCLUSION

Most of the healing in Indonesia is derived. This means that traditional healing practitioners do not have a strong religious background in healing. They obtain knowledge related to healing from hereditary knowledge, and study it independently. About the Covid-19 drug, healing practitioners in Java in particular, have different ways and methods in overcoming the Covid-19 virus that attacks a person's body. In fact, field facts also show that not a few people infected with the Covid-19 virus ended up dying. For this reason, traditional healing practitioners in Java offer several medicines that are believed to be able to overcome the spread of Covid-19. Among the materials they use as Covid-19 medicine is by using or utilizing spices, plants, and other traditional medicines.

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