

Correspondence

Indonesia is already in a state of '*Herd Stupidity*': is it a slump?

ABSTRACT

I hope this article can be an input for all of us, especially Indonesia, so that the phenomenon of '*Herd Stupidity*' can end soon and the '*positivity rate*' will decrease. If we all carry out disciplined behavior starting with ourselves, surely all of these things will be handled properly.

Keywords COVID-19, Herd Stupidity, Indonesia, positivity rate, psychopathology problems

Dear Editor,

The previous articles from Jain *et al.*¹ and Shen *et al.*² discuss the progress made in London as well as in China, particularly regarding the status of working people and death during this COVID-19. However, this is in contrast to what is happening in Indonesia today. Indonesia's current condition is getting worse; this is indicated by the increasing number of COVID-19 cases from day to day, especially in the capital city of Jakarta.³ An epidemiologist from the Faculty of Public Health, University of Indonesia, Pandu Riono, stated that currently Indonesia is in a state of '*Herd Stupidity*'.⁴ This condition is illustrated by the government's and society's neglect of the COVID-19 pandemic, as is common ignorance that has made COVID-19 in Indonesia unrelenting to this day. '*Herd Stupidity*' is a sarcastic term, which is the opposite of the term '*Herd Immunity*', which is one way to end the COVID-19.

One of the causes, when examined further, is that during times of crisis, there is an interaction between culture and both personal feelings (powerlessness) and information intake (conspiracy theories).⁵ The majority of Indonesian people are bored with situations like this, so they experience cabin fever,⁶ and they want to do activities like before the pandemic period.

This is indicated by the case that many Indonesian citizens were desperate to '*mudik*' during the last Eid al-Fitr, and the Indonesian government was also not firm in implementing policies in the field, such as the prohibition of '*mudik*'.⁴ '*Mudik*' is a social-cultural phenomena that occurs around Eid al-Fitr, the Islamic celebration that follows the fasting month

of Ramadan. It is also worth noting that just because '*mudik*' appears more frequently as Eid al-Fitr approaches its finish does not mean '*mudik*' is part of Islamic teaching. '*Mudik*' can also occur during the holidays of Christmas and New Year. The phrase comes from the word '*udik*,' which means '*village*' or '*little town*'. As a result, the definition of '*mudik*' is simply returning home from a big metropolis to a hamlet or a smaller city.⁷

This homecoming phenomenon creates so many crowds, so that large-scale transmission of COVID-19 can occur. In conjunction with the growing incidence of COVID-19 cases in Jakarta following persons returned after '*mudik*' to this metropolis.

As a result of this phenomenon, currently, the '*positivity rate*' of COVID-19 in Indonesia has reached 51.62%.⁸ This means that every one in two people who were tested by polymerase chain reaction in the last 24 hours, they tested positive for COVID-19. This is far from the World Health Organization's (WHO's) expectation that the expected '*positivity rate*' of each country is < 5%.⁹ This increasing number of cases has made a number of patients who are still positive for COVID-19 asked to leave the 'Wisma Atlet' Emergency Hospital, Jakarta.¹⁰ This is done to make room for new patients whose condition is worse, because the condition of the 'Wisma Atlet' Emergency Hospital is full.

The majority of Indonesian people who are currently infected with COVID-19 are those affected by the coronavirus with the delta variant.¹¹ WHO calls this variant highly

contagious, the fastest and the strongest strain ever and will 'pick up' the most vulnerable people in areas with low COVID-19 vaccination. This of course interferes with mental health for people who have not been infected with this type of COVID-19.¹¹ In addition they expect to be more vigorous in the resistance to the attacks by COVID-19, combined with the number of cases of individuals who were immunized but who are even infected by COVID-19.¹²

Based on the phenomena described above, through this correspondence, I suggest to all Indonesian people to maintain 5M in accordance with the government's advice, namely: (i) 'Memakai masker' (Wear masks); (ii) 'Menjaga jarak' (Keep your distance); (iii) 'Mencuci tangan' (Washing hands); (iv) 'Menjauhi kerumunan' (Stay away from crowds) and (v) 'Mengurangi mobilisasi' (Reduced mobilization).¹³ Keep mental health in check so that immunity is maintained, because psychologically, this can make their lives even more unhappy and will have an even more impact on their health because their immunity eventually decreases.¹⁴ According to Herbert and Cohen,¹⁵ a healthy body always starts with a healthy psyche. I suggest that we can do fun things to maintain our mental health, namely by listening to music, singing/playing music, watching music videos¹⁶ and dancing with family members at home.¹⁷ If you need further counseling assistance, please contact a counselor or psychologist who is always ready to help you at this time.

Hopefully this correspondence will be an input for all of us, especially Indonesia, so that the phenomenon of 'Herd Stupidity' can end soon and the 'positivity rate' will decrease.¹⁸ If we all carry out disciplined behavior starting with ourselves, surely all of these things will be handled properly.

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