

Stress Level of Mothers with Children with Special Needs

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ABSTRACT

Mothers with children with special needs have a higher stress level than parents with normal children. Mothers usually show psychological symptoms including depression and anxiety which will affect the quality of life of the child. Objective: This study aims to determine the stress level of mothers who have children with special needs at SLB Sindangsari Cikoneng Sindangsari. Methods: The study used a descriptive method with the instrument using a questionnaire. Results: It was found that of the 32 respondents in the moderate stress category, 30 respondents (93.75%) were found. Suggestion: support is needed, especially from the family so that the stress experienced by mothers with children with special needs can be overcome

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1. Introduction

It is estimated that there are approximately 4.2 million children with special needs in Indonesia using the UN assumption which states that at least 10 percent of school-age children (5-14 years) have special needs. Of these, some are children with mental and emotional disorders. Raising a child with special needs can be stressful, especially for parents^[1]. According to parents who feel stigmatized by their child's limitations, experience fatigue due to the demands of additional care, are socially isolated, and burdened by the financial costs of parenting, they may experience greater difficulties. Conditions like this have the potential to cause stress ^{[2][3]}.

Mothers of children with special needs have higher stress levels than parents of normal children^[4]. Psychological symptoms that often arise include depression, anxiety and pessimism, especially for mothers who spend more time with their children than fathers. High parenting pressure contributes to the worsening of the child's behavior problems over time and the child's behavior problems exacerbate the stress of parents, especially mothers. Mother's stress on the quality of life of children with special needs will have a negative impact^[5]. Mothers with high stress tend to be authoritarian, abusive, and interact negatively with their children. This stress also causes a lack of quality in the parent-child relationship, especially affecting the child's social life. Emotional actions taken by the mother will affect the perspective and belief of children with special needs towards other people they meet in the future^[6].

2. Method

Descriptive research method with a cross sectional approach. Sampling method with total sampling technique. The research instrument used a questionnaire that had previously been tested for validity. The single variable in this study is the stress level of mothers who have children with special needs. The population in this study is mothers with children with special needs who attend SLB Sindangsari Cikoneng. The inclusion criteria were mothers with children with special needs in grades 1-6 SD at SLB Sindangsari Cikoneng who lived outside the city.

The data collection technique used primary and secondary data by conducting a preliminary study through interviews and involving parties from SLB Sindangsari Cikoneng. The research instrument to see the level of maternal stress used a questionnaire assessment of 36 items. The higher the score obtained, the higher the stress level of the mother, and vice versa.

3. Results

TABLE 1.
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS CHARACTERISTICS

Variable	Frequency (person)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	21	65.6
Female	11	34.4
Parental Education		
No School	4	12.5
Base	15	46.9
Medium	12	37.7
Height	1	3.1
Parents Job		
Labor	12	37.5
Farmer	9	28.1
Civil Servant	1	3.1
Entrepreneur	6	18.8
Small traders	3	9.4
Others	1	3.1
Family Income		
Less	29	90.6
Medium	2	6.3
Height	1	3.1

TABLE 2.
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF MOTHER'S STRESS LEVEL WHO HAVE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Stress Level	Frequency (respondent)	Percentage (%)
Normal	0	0
Light stress	2	6,25
Moderate stress	30	93,75
Heavy stress	0	0
Quantity	32	100

4. Discussion

The results from table 4.4 show that of the 32 respondents with characteristic frequencies based on the stress level of mothers who have children with special needs, the dominant result is in the moderate stress category as many as 30 respondents (93.75%). The stress that arises in the mother is due to not being able to accept the fact that her child's condition is different from normal children [7]. Moderate stress lasts longer, from a few hours to a few days. The response to this level of stress is that there are disturbances in the stomach and intestines, such as ulcers, irregular bowel movements, muscle tension, disturbed sleep patterns, changes in the menstrual cycle, decreased concentration and memory. This study was supported by Rismawan et al (2019)[6] who stated that moderate stress levels were mostly found in mothers who had children with special needs.

The results of the analysis also show that the majority of mothers' education is basic education as many as 15 respondents, with the majority of work being housewives. The level of education affects whether or not someone easily absorbs and understands the knowledge they get from family interests. Thus, education plays a role in stress levels, where mothers with low education will find it more difficult to understand solutions to solve problems at hand. One of the causative factors in respondents with moderate stress is using positive coping, namely doing many

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activities or circumstances that are carried out with positive values [3]. Supported by the results of the questionnaire answers stating that respondents actively participate in activities and socialize. But if this moderate stress is not handled properly, it will develop into severe stress[7]. So, support for mothers who have children with special needs is absolutely there, because if this support is not obtained it will lead to emotional consequences such as anger, depression and deviant behavior.

5. Conclusion

It was found that of the 32 respondents in the moderate stress category, 30 respondents (93.75%) were found. Support is needed, especially from the husband so that the stress experienced by mothers with ABK can be overcome.

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