

Abstract

National Institute for Health Research and Development (NIHRD) of Ministry of Health (MoH) Indonesia had attempted to improve its performance indicator through research utilization for evidence-based health policy. Annually, NIHRD conducted research and generated various public health research findings. As a result, NIHRD had generated 24 policy briefs through its six research agencies among total 15 research agencies as its performance indicators in 2015. One of them was the briefs of the Early Detection of Leptospirosis in the Primary Health Centers (PHCs) which was published by the Centre of R&D for Vectors and Diseases Reservoirs in Salatiga, Central Java. The policy brief was targeted to the DHO (District Health Office) Semarang as a policy recommendation for early detection of leptospirosis because Semarang is one of the endemic areas with the high rate Case Fatality Rate (CFR) of leptospirosis. Nevertheless, there was limited evaluation yet about the research utilization. The research was conducted to answer the following research questions: how the researchers communicate their research findings of early detection to the DHO, how the DHO as the local health authorities utilized the research findings and what the impact of the research findings in Semarang.

The study employed a qualitative method by snowball purposive sampling and triangulation method to explore the research utilization of leptospirosis in Semarang. Data was collected by in-depth interviews through face to face meetings, telephone call, and e-mail correspondence during August 13 and October 4, 2017. There were eleven Key-Informants (KIs) including the researchers, the research management officers of Secretariat NIHRD, the central coordinator of Zoonotic diseases surveillance, DHO and PHC Semarang and the senior clinician of Dr. Kariadi Hospital. The interview results were transcribed, coded, and analyzed to determine the themes based on the conceptual framework of the study. The study focused on the communication strategies, stakeholders' involvement, and the other factors affected the research utilization and its impacts for the local health policy.

The results of this study show that the researchers promoted their research findings since the research process by involving the local health authorities and the local clinicians in Semarang. The direct involvement through dissemination activities, intensive personal contacts, using their expertise in surveillance and screening tools, clinical lectures, health promotion as the advocacy efforts in the local communities and there was the willingness of research replication in the other regions. The DHO and PHC Semarang reported their action strategies in the research use through Monthly Counseling and Rodents Eradication, Annual Early Vigilance System, Healthy Living Behavior Program (PHBS), peer education/clinical lectures, rodents' traps distributions and Rapid Diagnostic Tests Procurements.

The research utilization was perceived could affect the clinicians' technical knowledge in the

early detection of leptospirosis. Additionally, the research utilization had an influence to the local leaders in terms of an increase in the public awareness, the potential replication of the pilot project through surveillance-based, and the increase of health promotion advocacy in the DHO Semarang.

Despite an increase of the awareness and the active collaboration in the external networks, the challenges between the researchers, the research management, central coordinator of surveillance, DHO and PHC still exist. The challenges remain emerged such as the lack of communication/coordination in the dissemination process generated the poor quality of the briefs, the debatable recommendations in terms of the availability of laboratories and the RDTs and the lack of human resources in the central surveillance in terms of monitoring and evaluation. Concurrently, there are some factors had influenced the research utilization in Semarang such as the expert's opinion, the leadership between the researchers and DHO Semarang in terms of the high motivation in advocacy for health promotion programs.

Keywords: Research Utilization, Health Policy, Policy Brief, Stakeholder Involvement, Communication, Leptospirosis