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Improving the quality of midwife services with gentle birth



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ABSTRACT

Today, providing complementary care in health services for the community is increasingly mushrooming and is in great demand by all groups. The same is true for midwives. The midwife's duty as an extension of the government has resulted in the midwife having an obligation to take care of the condition of pregnant women until she gives birth, especially those related to maternal psychology. The gentle birth delivery method is one of the methods of delivery that supports government programs related to complementary and integrated health services. Through a gentle birth, the mother will feel valued, safe and comfortable, and the pain will be reduced. Evidence-based midwifery shows that if mothers are cared for and given support during labor, they will feel safe and comfortable so that the results will be better. Maternal love care is like allowing the mother to determine the desired position and movement during labor and birth. Midwives play a very important role. As advocates for mothers, midwives must ensure the needs of mothers, use adaptation skills, be flexible, and implement innovative practices to increase awareness of the services available to mothers.

Keywords: midwife, gentle birth, pregnancy.

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INTRODUCTION

Today, providing complementary care in health services for the community is increasingly mushrooming and is in great demand by all groups. Currently, the World Health Organization (WHO) strategy 2014-2023 develops and implements traditional and complementary medicine where the health services provided also pay attention to the existing holistic and cultural aspects.¹ This has also resulted in many integrated healthcare practices where in addition to using modern health theory, it is combined with health practice theory based on community culture so that the community accepts it more. The same is true for midwives. Midwives are the frontline in the government's steps to achieve the goals of the SDGs, where the midwife profession is the health profession closest to mothers, children, and families. Midwives have a strategic role in achieving the third target of the SDGs, namely a healthy and prosperous life, especially in maternal and infant health.²

The midwife's duty as an extension of the government has resulted in the

midwife having an obligation to take care of the condition of pregnant women until she gives birth, especially those related to maternal psychology. The trend of normal and natural childbirth is a hot issue among midwives, especially in the current era of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where the government emphasizes the third SDG goal: the welfare of mothers and children. Childbirth is both a natural and unique thing to do. Many mothers in labor are not strong enough to endure labor pain, and finally, they choose to have a cesarean section. Once the pain is felt to have exceeded the threshold of its ability to withstand pain, the mother will experience stress that affects the mother's psychology. Next is the section action, which will be their main choice so that the normal delivery will be ruled out. A holistic approach that includes caring for mothers and babies is an important mandate for Indonesian midwives, where the care provided is care that respects the mother's culture, beliefs and desires.³ This study aimed to provide a literature review for methods to improve the quality of midwife services with gentle birth.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GENTLE BIRTH PRACTICES ON MATERNITY

The gentle birth delivery method is one of the methods of delivery that supports government programs related to complementary and integrated health services. This method integrates physical functions, thoughts, souls and the belief that childbirth is a natural process by empowering oneself so that delivery is soft, safe, comfortable, and minimal trauma can be experienced by mothers giving birth. In a gentle birth, the mother can choose the delivery position, be it a squatting position, half sitting, sitting, standing or any position. She can follow her instincts and the baby's position, looking for a way out. The mother's pain and psychology greatly affect the delivery process. Through a gentle birth, the mother will feel valued, safe, and comfortable, and the pain will be reduced. Several gentle birth methods can be done: hypnobirthing, pranic healing, spinning babies, water birth, and lotus birth.^{4,5}

This gentle birth method is in great demand by married couples. This can be seen from patient satisfaction statements from social media today. Several healthcare facilities in Indonesia have synergized and integrated in carrying out gentle birth practices, including in Jakarta, Central Java, Bali, and Yogyakarta. Care for Mothers and Babies is a government program that is the main core of midwifery services, but in practice, midwives often experience dilemmas and limitations in implementing their care. There are still many pros and cons to gentle birth care, among others, related to normal and natural definitions, which result in the inconsistency of professional organizations in supporting the concept of this gentle birth delivery method. In addition, gentle birth is considered high risk for both mother and baby. There was once a circular letter from professional organizations in which professional organizations did not recommend the practice of gentle births. However, based on interviews conducted with the legal division of the Indonesian Midwives Association (*Ikatan Bidan Indonesia*, IBI) Central Java, IBI cannot prohibit the practice of gentle births until there is a scientific study or legal regulations stating it is prohibited. This shows that there is no clear regulation related to midwifery practice, and, questions arise about the midwife's authority in natural delivery assistance actions by taking into account the holistic aspect of the patient. Considering the midwife's authority determines the legal protection for midwives in helping natural childbirth through gentle births.

A gentle birth is a birth that is seen as a natural response in the body. This is what is meant by natural childbirth. Love will be recorded if a soul-friendly and warm birth occurs or is called a gentle birth. A gentle birth will grow physically, mentally, and spiritually based on love and affection until adulthood.⁴ This supports patients' satisfaction with the gentle birth delivery services provided. Natural childbirth is strongly supported by the anatomical conditions of the body, especially the mother's pelvis. Thus, the condition of the pelvic muscles must be studied to help the baby take an influential position. In this

case, the delivery position becomes the principal thing in gentle birth delivery.⁶

Evidence-based midwifery shows that if mothers are cared for and given support during labor, they will feel safe and comfortable so that the results will be better. Maternal love care is like allowing the mother to determine the desired position and movement during labor and birth. The concept of maternal care, according to the Center for Health Education in 2003, includes safe care based on evidence-based and contributes to improving maternal survival, providing a sense of comfort and security during the birth process, respecting cultural customs, religious practices, and beliefs by involving mothers and families in making decisions; respect the fact that pregnancy and childbirth are natural and mother-centered processes. Gentle birth uses the principle of maternal care with a holistic approach.⁷

The use of complementary therapy in maternity care, including the gentle birth method, is caused because consumers are looking for strategies that help them overcome the discomfort of pregnancy and childbirth. Midwives must consider the difficulties faced by mothers who do not know about health services and lack self-confidence and ensure that they can create a conducive environment that allows mothers to express their wishes regarding maternity care. Midwives play a very important role. As advocates for mothers, midwives must ensure the needs of mothers, use adaptation skills, be flexible, and implement innovative practices to increase awareness of the services available to mothers.⁸

Based on research, the practice of gentle births, in principle, uses local wisdom such as paying attention to the mother's culture, customs, psychology, and emotions; it is a practice of caring for mothers by using a holistic/comprehensive approach based on the wishes and comfort of the mother such as choosing a birth position, using music therapy, mind therapy, energy therapy and bonding attachment of mother and baby where the patient is satisfied with the services provided.

The authority midwives possess will guarantee legal certainty so that midwives get legal protection in the practice of

gentle births. Based on the results, if the respondent has fulfilled the complete administration, he is also entitled to exercise his authority.

The differences of opinion among IBI members can cause gaps and conflicts of interest where the factors for these differences of opinion include different knowledge about gentle births, social issues that affect their perspective, and different individual interests. Humans in social life need the protection of their interests. Protection of interests can be achieved if guidelines or regulations determine a person's behavior so as not to harm others and themselves.⁹ Society has ethics, and so do midwives. The principles contained in ethics are not harmful, have good intentions, and fulfill aspects of confidentiality and justice.¹⁰

The practice of gentle birth is a tangible manifestation of the principle of no harm and good intentions. In practice, a gentle birth will provide comfort and security because of the midwife's assistance at all times, where this is a form of real maternal care. The assistance from pregnancy to childbirth, such as yoga, spinning babies, perineal massage, spiritual support through spiritual music, and praying with religious leaders according to the mother's religion. Justice is closely related to the second midwife's oath, in which the midwife does not discriminate against her client. In gentle birth, the midwife will make an informed choice of the delivery services performed. Likewise, it is filled with mindful and aware services, oriented to the mother's self-confidence, and her attention is focused without any judgment and full awareness of the body's response.⁴

This is in accordance with the first midwife's oath. Article 23 of the 2009 Health Law regulates the authority of health workers to provide health services according to their field of expertise. Midwives have the authority to assist in normal delivery, and in efforts to achieve normal delivery, so midwives must provide support in the form of alternative and complementary services based on evidence-based midwifery updates. The combination of medical theory and biocultural sciences such as body energy, herbs, and aromatherapy, cultural approaches will form awareness

about the concept of health, and this is a comprehensive service performed by midwives. The midwife's authority is a form of the midwife's right to do something. Minister of Health Regulation (*Peraturan Menteri Kesehatan*, PMK) Number 43 of 2016 concerning Minimum Service Standards in the Health Sector, which also refers to PMK Number 97 of 2014 Article 14 Paragraphs (2) and (3) regulates if midwives can perform normal delivery services and referrals must be made if complications occur.

PMK Number 28 of 2017 concerning Permits and Implementation of Midwifery Practices Article 18, midwives have the authority to provide maternal, child, reproductive, and family planning health services. This is based on Government Regulation Number 2 of 2018 concerning Minimum Service Standards and PMK Number 43 of 2016 concerning Minimum Service Standards in the Health Sector. Gentle birth, which in principle provides comfort and minimal trauma, also refers to PMK Number 103 of 2014 concerning Traditional Health Services Article 1, 11, and 12, where gentle birth is a health service that combines bio-cultural and biomedical sciences through skills, be it manual techniques, energy therapy, or thinking. Gentle birth types such as hypnobirthing are thought therapy, pranic healing uses pranic/energy therapy while spinning babies use manual techniques. It also supports WHO complementary and alternative health services (CAM) programs by utilizing local wisdom. Patient comfort is a mandatory thing given by midwives, as stated in the Decree of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2007 concerning Midwife Professional Standards in the fifth competency.

There are no routine baby births—every birth is a special occasion. For most vaginal deliveries, a more human and personal approach can be taken as long as the partner and the midwife are comfortable.¹¹ Interfering with the normal physiological process of labor and birth without medical necessity increases the risk of complications for the mother and baby. Six evidence-based care practices

promote physiological birth: avoiding medically unnecessary induction of labor, allowing freedom of movement for the laboring woman, providing continuous labor support, avoiding routine interventions and restrictions, encouraging spontaneous pushing in non supine positions, and keeping mothers and babies together after birth without restrictions on breastfeeding. Midwives are uniquely positioned to provide these care practices and help childbearing women make informed choices based on evidence.¹²

The anxiety experienced by pregnant women for the first time is related to the first experience, so the third trimester feels even more anxious because it is getting closer to the delivery process. Therefore, relaxation techniques are needed for pregnant women to overcome before birth. One of the relaxation techniques is a gentle birth. Pregnancy and childbirth services are needed to provide comfort and reduce anxiety in dealing with childbirth in pregnant women. A gentle birth is a way of giving birth that is calm, gentle, polite and utilizes all the elements of nature in the human body. Birth is the beginning of life, the beginning of mothering, and of fathering too. We all deserve a good beginning.¹³

CONCLUSION

The implementation of gentle birth practices is the application of maternity services to maternity mothers by paying attention to comfort, security, mother's wishes, and based on a culture where gentle birth practices are in great demand, as evidenced by the number of clients who choose to use the gentle birth method is greater than the method without gentle birth. The holistic approach is closely related to gentle birth, which views the mother as a whole. It can be said that this gentle birth method is an old delivery method with a new term. Midwives also must develop themselves in terms of evidence-based knowledge and skills that pay attention to mothers' needs. The midwife's authority in carrying out a gentle birth is seen as assisting normal

childbirth. It also refers to the midwife's oath, minimum standards of care in the health sector, professional standards and the midwife's code of ethics. The existence of authority will lead to providing legal protection for midwives who perform the gentle birth method with a holistic approach. Midwives have the authority to assist childbirth with the gentle birth method, and a holistic care approach is a challenge for midwives in providing care where this method is an old way with a new term.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE

Not applicable.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors contributed equally to the writing of this article.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors state that they have no conflicts of interest.

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