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## Humanistic Counseling as a Strategy for Overcoming Low Self-Esteem in Asthmatic Patients

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to determine the extent to which humanistic counseling plays a role in overcoming low self-esteem. This research is a case study research on a patient suffering from asthma at a regional hospital in Boyolali. Data collection was carried out using interviews, observation, and psychological testing methods. Based on the results of the assessment that had been carried out, the patient felt limited in carrying out all activities due to her asthma, so this made her even lower in self-esteem. The condition of low self-esteem has many negative impacts on the patient's life, such as being unproductive and limiting social contact with the surrounding environment. Humanistic counseling is one strategy that can help patients overcome low self-esteem. The patient begins to accept her condition and express the positive side of her abilities.

### INTRODUCTION

Asthma is a major non-communicable disease (NCD) and attacks both children and adults. Untreated asthma sufferers can experience sleep disturbances, daytime fatigue and poor concentration (WHO, 2023). The growth of the Indonesian population suffering from asthma until 2020 according to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia) is 4.5% of the total population of Indonesia, this percentage can be considered large because the total number of people suffering from asthma is more than 12 million in Indonesia (RSST Health Promotion Team - Dr. Soeradji Tirtonegoro Hospital Klaten, 2022). Globally, asthma sufferers account for 6% of adults and 10% of children. Asthma is a physical disorder of human breathing that can be triggered by the following factors: gender, age, history of atopy, food, weather changes, activity, birth weight, nutritional status, breastfeeding, dust (Usman et al., 2015) .

Psychologically, there are several factors that trigger asthma, including: anxiety, stress and sadness in patients, this can also be caused by emotional activities carried out by patients with asthma such as watching emotional films, doing complicated work, even individual interactions that trigger psychological stress. (Ramadhian, 2012).

Asthma can occur when the lungs are irritated by the factors above, then the muscles in the respiratory tract become stiff and the muscles in the respiratory organs narrow. An increase in phlegm production in asthma sufferers can worsen breathing difficulties during a relapse in asthma sufferers (Fadhilah Hardini, 2019). In certain conditions, asthma patients have limited conditions and activities which result in asthma patients having to take extra care of themselves so that their asthma recurrence does not interfere with their daily lives. Asthma sufferers are limited in carrying out sports activities, breathing cold, dry air which results in bronchoconstriction.

In asthma there are physiological and psychological changes. Physiologically, the physical changes that an individual can feel are difficulty breathing, this is because the individual will experience wheezing and panting, difficulty sleeping, when asthma recurs the individual will experience difficulty speaking, physically another thing that is visible is the presence of circles around the eyes, nose size decreases, shoulders become higher, upper teeth appear prominent (Utami & Wideasavitri, 2013). Severe asthma often disrupts family, social and work life, limits career choices and leisure options and affects emotional and mental health (Global Initiative for Asthma 2019).

An individual's health status is closely related to their self-esteem, an individual's productivity in adulthood can be disrupted if they experience certain illnesses, which can affect the individual's self-concept, especially their self-esteem (Putra et al., 2020). Self-esteem is an individual's assessment of himself referring to affect, namely positive affect and negative affect (Morris Rosenberg 1965). Individuals have self-esteem and can appreciate themselves as good enough people. Self-esteem is an individual's ability to think, solve problems, achieve success, and happiness, feel valuable, fulfill needs and desires, and enjoy the fruits of the efforts made (Maemunah in Maulida & Rifayanti, 2022). This indicates that individuals with a good self-concept will have good self-esteem, but this can be disturbed if they suffer from certain illnesses, especially in the productive age range.

The condition of individuals with negative self-concept problems results in individuals having low self-esteem so there is a tendency for individuals to evaluate themselves with a negative view so that individuals have a tendency to lack self-confidence and fail to achieve goals or desires (Fazriyani & Mubin, 2021). Based on a study conducted at Gondohutomo Hospital, low self-esteem can also occur in individuals aged 12-60 years (Fazriyani & Mubin, 2021). Triggers for low self-esteem arise in individuals due to certain situations such as trauma resulting from divorce, rape, dropping out of school, and so on, as well as chronic consequences in the form of negative feelings in individuals who have experienced illness or certain treatments for a long time (Muhith, 2015). Sufferers of certain illnesses can experience feelings of helplessness, and frustration, accompanied by symptoms of depression or schizophrenia, and feelings of lack of self-confidence (Widyastuti, 2003; Prabowo, A. D. A., & Bashori, K., 2023). Low self-esteem is a problem in an individual's self-concept which results in individuals having self-doubt or a negative view of themselves, even feelings of failure in achieving their goals or desires. This can also occur in individuals with certain situations or chronicities when suffering from illness.

Signs of low self-esteem in individuals are experiencing a decrease in productivity, negative views on other people, excessive irritability or irritation, tension in carrying out the individual's role, physical complaints, conflicting views on life, rejection of individual abilities, self-reduction, use of certain substances, and withdrawal from reality (Ramadhani et al., 2021).

The results of research conducted by Ahmad, et al. (2020) on stigma and self-esteem in asthma patients show that low control over asthma can trigger low self-esteem in patients (Ahmad et al., 2020). In line with this, research conducted by Sulistiono (2016) on asthma patients at Dr. Soepraoen Hospital Malang also revealed that the more the degree of asthma is controlled, the more the patient's self-esteem will increase (Delys 2019). This shows that asthma really needs to be treated both from a physical and psychosocial perspective. Physical health problems in individuals with certain types of illness, duration of illness, and treatment are factors that influence symptoms of low self-esteem. Asthma patients with low self-esteem problems can reduce self-confidence, giving rise to the patient's tendency to experience self-doubt, regret the illness they have suffered, and experience stress. Meanwhile, when patients have good self-esteem, patients

tend to be able to optimize their potential and are able to rise from adversity which can reduce the level of stress experienced by patients (Utami & Widiasavitri, 2013). Good self-esteem will also improve psychological well-being (Diener in Hepper, 2016) which is a very important thing for every individual to have in their life.

Reviewing the potential for low self-esteem in patients with asthma, it is necessary to provide treatment to increase the patient's self-esteem. Therefore, humanistic counseling is needed to help overcome patients' self-esteem problems. The research results of Hanifah, et al (2017) show that counseling person-centered therapy which is part of humanistic counseling has proven to be effective in increasing scores self self-esteem from 48.45% to 75.65%. Through the humanistic counseling process, clients benefit from being in a transparent therapeutic relationship, their existence is appreciated and understood by the counselor. Apart from that, by using humanistic counseling clients can actively choose and make decisions for themselves and their environment (Natakusuma, 2011).

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted on asthma patients at one of the regional hospitals in Boyolali. The patient is female and 20 years old. The method used in this research is a qualitative case study. The case study carried out in this research is a descriptive case study to understand individuals more deeply by practicing it in an integrative and comprehensive manner. This step is taken to understand the character of the individual being studied in depth and help determine solutions to the problems faced by that individual (Susilo Rahardjo and Gudnanto, 2011).

Data collection in this research used interview techniques, observation, and psychological tests. Psychological tests carried out on patients include graphic tests (DAP, BAUMN, and HTP) to see the development of the patient's personality. Apart from that, there are Rosenberg Scale Self Esteem (RSES) which is given to patients to determine the patient's level of self-esteem and the Sacks Sentence Completion Test (SSCT) to reveal the patient's interpersonal relationship with her environment. RMIB test is also given to the patient to determine the patient's interest in one's job. After that, the researchers carried out humanistic counseling to the patient to help overcome the patient's low self-esteem and

provided psychoeducation to the patient's parents. The steps for humanistic counseling given to patients are explained in Table 1.

Apart from carrying out humanistic counseling with patients, researchers also provide psychoeducation to the patient's parents with the aim of providing an overview of the patient's current condition and the good possibilities that the patient can have. Through this, it is hoped that parents can understand the patient and be able to provide space for them to develop for the better. The steps taken include:

1. Provide an explanation to the family about what the patient is experiencing (low self-esteem)
2. Explain the potential that can be developed from patients so that patients are more productive
3. Providing an understanding of the role of the family in raising the patient's enthusiasm and providing opportunities for patients to optimize their potential
4. Provide the opportunity for the patient's family to ask questions or respond to the explanation that has been given

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the assessment that was carried out, it was found that the patient experienced various important events in her life that underlie her complaints related to low self-esteem. Since the patient was 2 years old, the patient was no longer cared for by her parents, but by her grandmother. This makes the patient less attached to her biological parents. In fact, the first year of an individual's life is important in forming an attachment, because instinctively the baby and mother have the desire to form an attachment (Bowlby, 1958). The Islamic view regarding the attachment of parents to children as narrated in the hadith of Rasulullah SAW is as follows:

*"The hadith that started when the Messenger of Allah (PBUH) kissed Sayyid Hasan bin Ali and next to him was Aqro' bin Habis At Tamimy who was sitting. Then Aqro' said: "Verily I have 10 children, and none of them have I ever kissed." So the Messenger of God SAW looked at Aqro' and then said: "Whoever does not love, he will not be loved." (HR. Bukhari)*

Through Hadith Bukhari number 5538, there is a conclusion that Rasulullah SAW strongly recommended parents have a close and good attachment pattern with their children.

Separation from parents is a traumatic thing for individuals because they lose a figure from whom to find security and love. In addition, attachment throughout the first year of life constitutes an initial working model of the self as a basis for understanding the sense of self (Young, 2013). So the response and attention from parents directly have the power to influence the aspects sense of self in children. The traumatic event of separation from parents not only impacts the patient's psychological condition but also the patient's physical condition. Feelings of surprise, sadness and joy combined to trigger asthma symptoms in the patient, in addition to the fact that the patient has a history of asthma.

The condition of the patient who did not live with her parents until adolescence resulted in the patient feeling that he received different treatment from her parents. The patient felt that her father always allowed her younger siblings to do the activities they wanted even though they were far from home. Meanwhile, patients are not allowed to leave the house often and do quite heavy housework such as washing, lifting water in pans, and so on. The father's treatment, which tended to be too protective of the patient, resulted in the patient feeling uncomfortable because she had to always be watched and asked about her whereabouts when she was outside the house. This results in the patient's lacking the experience to be independent and involved in expanding relationships with her peers, so the patient finds it difficult to adjust to the environment. The results of research conducted by Musthofa (2020) support the findings of this research, namely the higher the overprotective behavior given by parents, the lower the child's self-adjustment (Musthofa 2020). On the contrary, the lower of overprotective behavior given by parents, the higher the child's self-adjustment. The patient's lack of experience then makes the patient unsure of her abilities, feel unappreciated, and difficult to actualize her abilities. This condition is in line with the results of research conducted by Hayee and Rizvi (2017) that fathers' parenting styles have a significant influence on the development of self-esteem in young adults (Hayee\* and Rizvi 2017). The result of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) shows a score of 12 which increasingly indicates that the patient has low self-esteem. This low self-esteem then makes the patient feel limited in looking for work because he feels there is nothing he can do well. Patients also feel insecure and unable to see the positive side of themselves.

The results of the humanistic counseling carried out by researchers showed changes in a positive direction in patients, although not very significant. These changes are explained in Table 2.

Humanistic counseling can help overcome low self-esteem in adults, including adult asthma sufferers. This is supported by research conducted by Humboldt & Leal (2012) which shows that *Person-Centered Therapy* (in this research, humanistic counseling) in adults has been proven to be effective in increasing self-esteem (Humboldt, Humboldt, and Leal 2012). Increased self-esteem according to Rogers (1980) is a reduction in differences (*gap*) between the real *self* and the ideal *self* (Rogers 1952). This is indicated by changes in the patient's perspective regarding the work they will undertake. Initially, the patient wanted to work in an office, but after the patient was able to recognize herself and her potential, the patient had a new perspective that works such as writing short stories felt more suitable for her current condition. Knowing yourself is the key to being able to set goals more clearly. Allah has explained in Surah Al Isra verse 84 that:

*"Say (Muhammad), "Everyone acts according to his own nature." So your Lord knows better whose path is truer."*

This verse explains that every human being has their own talents that we need to explore so that our goals and potential work in harmony. Through Surah Ali Imran verse 139, Allah SWT said:

*"Do not be weak, and do not (also) be sad, even though you are the highest people (in rank), if you are believers."*

God's Word shows that God comforts someone who is being tested, for example suffering from a serious illness, by reminding him that humans are creatures of the highest rank. In this regard, the message that can be taken is that tests from Allah do not necessarily make us give up and limit ourselves, but instead, we can interpret these tests as meaning that Allah will raise a person's status higher if that person is able to pass it well.

Psychoeducation provided to families is also able to have a positive impact on the patient indirectly. After psychoeducation was carried out, the patient's parents had a new perspective regarding the patient's condition. Parents have a desire to support the patient's interest in writing short stories. In line with research conducted by Rezaei-Dehaghani & Keshvari (2015) that adolescent self-esteem is highly correlated with family *functioning* (Rezaei-Dehaghani, Paki, and Keshvari 2015). This is very beneficial for the

development of patient self-esteem because family support is important in forming patient self-esteem.

## Tables

Table 1. Steps to Humanistic Counseling

Session	Activity	Goals/targets for change	Procedure
Session 1	Opening	Provide understanding to patients about the problems they are experiencing and explain the counseling process that will be provided	a. Explain to the patient the results of the assessment that have been obtained b. Explain to the patient the goals to be achieved in the counseling process c. Make an agreement between the patient, family, and researchers regarding the counseling that will be provided
Session 2	Stage 1 counseling	Building commitment with the patient	a. Build interaction with patients by creating conditions of "unconditional positive regard" b. Ask the patient to say what she feels
Session 3	Stage 2 counseling	Build self-understanding or awareness of the patient's current condition	a. Direct the patient to explain her potential and weaknesses. b. Encourage patients to be herself
Session 5	Counseling stages 3, 4, and 5	a. Providing direction to the patient to be able to make their own decisions (freedom to choose) b. Helping patients to change attitudes for the better c. Provide direction to the patient to be responsible for the choices she makes	a. Helps interpret what the patient conveys by reflecting on content and feelings b. Reassure patient that the anxiety they experience is an awareness of her responsibility to choose c. Helping patient by strengthening her to accept the conditions that occur (related to the asthma they suffer from and families who tend to be too worried about the patient's condition) d. Helping the patient to be able to open herself up to relate to other people



Session 6	Closing	
	a. <i>Post-test</i>	Seeing the differences experienced by patients before and after the counseling process
		a. Asking the patient about how she feels and what she will do to achieve their life goals b. Providing the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

Table 2. Results of Humanistic Counseling

No	Before	After
1	The patient refused to describe herself on the grounds that he could not judge herself	The patient is able to describe herself through the worksheet Johari Window
2	The patient refused to write down her strengths and weaknesses for reasons of embarrassment to the practitioner	Patients are able to write down strengths and weaknesses via a worksheet "self-assessment" and about me
3	The patient feels insecure and sees herself as having no positive side	The patient begin to analyze what abilities and interests she has (has the skills to write short stories and cook)
4	The patient thinks that she can't look for work because she thinks that successful people are people who work in offices	The patient began to think that she had the opportunity to open her own business
5	Interest results from the RMIB test: the patient has an interest in scientific and medical fields RSES score: 12 (low self-esteem)	Interests after getting to know herself better: trying to create creativity by cooking or writing short stories RSES score: 20 (normal)

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation given above, humanistic counseling can help overcome low self-esteem. Humanistic counseling can increase patient self-esteem because patients are able to recognize themselves and begin to appreciate their potential. Support from the family can also help improve the patient's condition.

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