

Tuberculosis in Pregnancy and Its Impact on Children

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Tuberculosis, or TB, is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It can affect anyone, and the organs most commonly affected are the lungs, spine, skin, brain, lymph nodes, and heart.

The recent data from WHO stated that a total of 1.23 million people died from TB in 2024 (including 150 000 among people with HIV). Globally, TB is the world's leading cause of death from a single infectious agent and among the top 10 causes of death.

The WHO states that eight countries account for approximately two-thirds of all global tuberculosis (TB) cases. These countries are India (25%), Indonesia (10%), the Philippines (6.8%), China (6.5%), Pakistan (6.3%), Nigeria (4.8%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (3.9%), and Bangladesh (3.6%).

One group vulnerable to contracting TB is pregnant women. Changes in the immune system during pregnancy make mothers more susceptible to infectious diseases or exacerbate pre-existing conditions.

According to World Health Organization data cited in global reports, an estimated 200,000 pregnant or postpartum women develop TB worldwide each year. Most of these cases occur in Africa and Southeast Asia, including Indonesia.

Based on health program references and epidemiological data from the Ministry of Health, aligned with global estimates, the proportion of pregnant women suffering from TB is 1% - 3% of the total number of women of childbearing age or of TB cases in women. If calculated specifically, the number of pregnant women suffering from TB can reach thousands or even tens of thousands each year in Indonesia.

TB during pregnancy not only impacts the mother's health but also the health of the fetus she carries until the baby grows into adulthood. Impacts on the fetus include miscarriage, intrauterine death, stillbirth, low birth weight, premature birth, and congenital TB. Meanwhile, the impact on the baby after birth and toddlerhood includes impaired growth and development, making them susceptible to severe TB symptoms.

Early detection of TB during pregnancy is crucial to prevent health impacts on the mother and fetus. Public awareness of early TB detection, especially among women of childbearing age, must be increased through various media. The increase in social media use among women should be leveraged to educate about TB prevention.