



Book Reviews

In Sickness and in Health: Diagnosing Indonesia. *Firman Witoelar and Ariane Utomo (eds)* ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, Singapore, 2022, pp. xiv + 225. ISBN 978-9-815-01184-5 (pbk).

The phrase ‘in sickness and in health’ is commonly used in marriage ceremonies as a commitment to love and support each other through both good and difficult times. This commitment to go through challenges together applies to people-public-private partnerships in the health system. Since Indonesia has committed to improving the longevity and well-being of its citizens, *In Sickness and In Health: Diagnosing Indonesia* is an important and comprehensive book that examines how Indonesia’s efforts in achieving its commitment to the longevity and well-being of its citizens have progressed so far.

The strength of the edited book by Firman Witoelar and Ariane Utomo lies in the compilation of expertise and diverse perspectives of various contributors ranging from scholars, policymakers and expert practitioners together in a highly interdisciplinary approach. The book is well-researched and offers valuable insights into the complexities of the Indonesian healthcare system and health for all within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. It comprises two parts: Challenges and Opportunities within the Indonesian Health System, and Lessons and Strategies to achieve Health for All written in 11 chapters excluding the introduction chapter.


The first part examines the challenges that Indonesia faces both in data collection for health statistics and in the healthcare system. Terence H. Hull discusses the significance of the 2020 population census in Indonesia as a crucial source of health statistics that was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of post-enumeration surveys due to the pandemic may compromise the census’s quality, yet Hull evaluates available data on population, fertility, and survivorship with a warning about their accuracy. Other authors offer insightful analysis into the root causes of challenges in the healthcare system, including the politics of health policy reform. The national health insurance, *Jaminan Kesehatan Nasional (JKN)* program, increased demand for affordable, high-quality medical services, but supply-side barriers cause regional disparities in specialist access due to factors like geography and stakeholder conflicts. Although regulatory barriers to producing and licensing specialists exist, the private sector is responding to the expansion of the JKN. Andreasta Meliala and Srimurni Rarasati’s chapter investigate these supply barriers in-depth. Furthermore, Elizabeth Pisani *et al.* investigate how the JKN program has affected medicine production and distribution in Indonesia. The government has incentivized lower drug prices through regulations governing procurement, with insurance now covering most patient drug costs. The authors explore how this drive for affordability has created segmented markets for different quality medicines at different price points, affecting availability and quality. Andrew Rosser and Luky Djani observed significant changes in the politics of health policy reform in three areas (health insurance, tobacco control and health security) and a shift towards a more rights-based approach to healthcare in the post-New Order regime in Indonesia. Moreover, Laksono Trisnantoro analyses the impact of COVID-19 on health reform financing and highlights the challenges posed by the high proportion of payment for advanced treatment services from BPJS-K. He proposes a roadmap for

post-pandemic health reform that prioritizes primary care screening and prevention to improve financial sustainability.

In the second part of the book, the authors focus on strategies and lessons to achieve health for all, including those experiencing issues with maternal and child health, disability, mental health, and infectious diseases. The chapters offer practical solutions to the challenges discussed earlier and what Indonesians experience in their everyday life. Diana Contreras Suárez and Lisa Cameron examine the understudied issue of disability, providing a detailed analysis of the available data and offering solutions to improve access to healthcare for people with disabilities. The prevalence of disability varies widely depending on the definition used and the data sources. However, it is clear that disability is a significant issue, with millions of Indonesians affected. People with disabilities face multiple barriers to accessing services, including physical barriers, social stigma, and discrimination. Another serious health challenge is highlighted by Aliza Hunt, Sandersan Onie and Hans Pols— i.e. the urgent need to prioritize mental health in Indonesia's national health agenda. They present a comprehensive overview of the current mental health system, treatment gaps, and strategies used by civil society, consumer groups, and for-profit organizations to address these challenges based on their field-based research experience.

Salut Muhidin and Jerico F. Pardosi address the persistent issue of maternal health in Indonesia and provide a comprehensive overview of its determinants and trends, as well as regional disparities in policy initiatives and health provision. Drawing on their recent fieldwork in East Nusa Tenggara, they identify three crucial determinants of maternal mortality in the region: delay in (i) decision-making to seek care, (ii) reaching a health facility, and (iii) receiving adequate care. Additionally, Tiara Marthias and Yodi Mahendradhata, highlight the significant disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic on health services, particularly those related to maternal and child health. They argue that the pandemic has revealed pre-existing weaknesses in the Indonesian health system that has exacerbated existing health inequalities. I Nyoman Sutarsa examines the challenges faced by Indonesians in accessing healthcare services, particularly in the context of social and structural factors. While there have been improvements in the overall availability of healthcare services in Indonesia, there remain significant gaps in access for marginalized and remote communities. Finally, Adi Utarini enlightens us with a practical innovation in tackling dengue, by injecting a *Wolbachia* bacterium into the *Aedes* mosquito. This innovation seems to give a promising outcome in reducing dengue incidences.

Overall, this book is a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the challenges and opportunities facing the healthcare system and health for all Indonesians. The book is highly recommended for healthcare professionals, policymakers, researchers, public health students and anyone interested in improving the quality of healthcare in Indonesia and beyond.

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