

Experience of Women of Reproductive Age in Overcoming Physiological and Pathological Leucorrhoea (Fluor albus)

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Abstract

Introduction: Leucorrhoea is divided into two, namely physiological vaginal discharge and pathological vaginal discharge. About 90% of women in Indonesia have the potential to experience vaginal discharge because Indonesia is a region with a tropical climate, so that fungi easily develop which results in many cases of vaginal discharge. Many women of childbearing age lack knowledge about vaginal discharge, either physiologically or pathologically. They often think that vaginal discharge is a normal thing to experience, and apart from being embarrassed to experience vaginal discharge, women of childbearing age feel uncomfortable having to see a health professional. **Research Objectives:** This study aims to explore the experiences of women of childbearing age (WUS) in dealing with physiological and pathological vaginal discharge (fluor albus). **Method:** This study uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive phenomenological approach. Participants amounted to five people. **Results:** Data collection used in-depth interviews and data analysis using the Colaizzi technique. This study identified two themes, namely: 1) Physical and psychological complaints of vaginal discharge, 2) Efforts and effectiveness in overcoming vaginal discharge. **Conclusion:** there are differences in physical and psychological complaints experienced by participants who experience physiological and pathological vaginal discharge. How to deal with physiological vaginal discharge only requires natural medicines without medical drugs, while pathological vaginal discharge is not enough with natural medicines and requires medical treatment.

Keywords: Physiological, Leucorrhoea, Pathological, Experience, Women of Reproductive Age.



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INTRODUCTION

Women's reproductive health problems have a broad involvement and affect many aspects of life. Lack of knowledge about reproductive health, strong negative issues circulating about reproductive health and taboos to discuss reproductive health problems such as menstrual disorders, sexually transmitted disease problems, and also complaints of vaginal discharge are the cause of increasing women's reproductive health problems (Oktafia & Indiasuti, 2022). Leucorrhoea is a problem that requires special attention because of the high burden of reproduction, pregnancy, morbidity, infertility, increased susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and the doubling of HIV transmission. If abnormal vaginal discharge is not treated, the infection can spread to the uterus, fallopian tubes and infect the ovaries. This can cause damage to the internal reproductive organs and cause infertility (infertility), while in pregnant women it can cause premature birth, low birth weight (LBW), and others. So it is important to pay attention and be aware of the appearance of symptoms of vaginal discharge (Himalaya, 2017).

Leucorrhoea is a white vaginal secretion, the liquid has varying amounts, concentrations, and odors. Leucorrhoea is not a disease but a clinical manifestation of a disease (Purnamasari & Hidayanti, 2019). Leucorrhoea is divided into two types, namely physiological vaginal discharge and pathological vaginal discharge. Physiological vaginal discharge is characterized by watery, odorless, non-itchy discharge, which usually occurs

before menstruation or after menstruation, while pathological vaginal discharge is characterized by large amounts of discharge from the vagina, itching, unpleasant odor, and yellow discharge. greenish, caused by problems with the reproductive organs such as problems with genital infections and malignancies of the reproductive organs. Physiological vaginal discharge is indeed a normal reproductive health problem and can occur in almost all women. Leucorrhoea is another problem after menstruation. Unfortunately, physiological vaginal discharge (normal vaginal discharge) is often not taken seriously. As a result, physiological vaginal discharge can develop as an indication of a disease that requires treatment (Widyastuti, Nabuasa, & Ndoen, 2021).

Leucorrhoea (Fluor Albus) affects about 50% of the female population and affects almost all age groups. Research data on women's reproductive health shows that 75% of women worldwide will experience vaginal discharge at least once in their lives and 45% of them will experience as many as two or more (Passe, Saleh, & Ikawati., 2022). Around 90% of women in Indonesia have the potential to experience vaginal discharge because Indonesia is a region with a tropical climate, so that fungi easily develop which results in many cases of vaginal discharge (Wijayanti & Susilowati, 2022). Indonesia has a tropical climate so the potential for vaginal discharge is very high because mushrooms grow easily in damp places. Reproductive organs that are unclean can cause infections caused by fungi, viruses, bacteria and parasites, leading to candidiasis, trichomoniasis, bacterial vaginosis, to the worst such as cervical cancer, tumors and other vaginal abnormalities (Setianingrum & Parida, 2022). Some of the leucorrhoea data above also includes other factors that can trigger vaginal discharge, namely endogenous and exogenous factors that influence each other (Malau, Boy, & Nabila, 2021). The risk of vaginal discharge in women can occur at various ages, where women of childbearing age have a higher risk of vaginal discharge than teenagers. This happens because women of childbearing age often experience PID (Pelvic Inflammatory Disease) (Syari, Harahap, Nasution (2022).

Women of childbearing age (WUS) are women aged between 15 and 49 years. Women of childbearing age are still in their reproductive age, namely from the time they experience their first menstruation until they stop having menstruation with various statuses such as single, married, or widows who can still have children (Sampara, Sudirman, & Ohorella., 2021). A woman in her reproductive period usually experiences negative psychological symptoms as well as physical symptoms. Symptoms vary and are usually worse before or during menstruation. Some women, especially women of childbearing age (WUS), also experience mood and physical disturbances that are less stable causing vaginal discharge (Sari & Gultom, 2022). Many women of childbearing age lack knowledge about vaginal discharge, either physiologically or pathologically. They often think that vaginal discharge is a normal thing to experience, and apart from being embarrassed to experience vaginal discharge, women of childbearing age feel uncomfortable having to see a health worker (Mulyani, Handajani, & Safriana, 2020).

Based on a preliminary study conducted by researchers on December 14 2022 in the work area of the Sail Health Center, data were obtained from the key informant on November 16, an IVA examination was carried out. From the results of the IVA examination, data were obtained on women of childbearing age (WUS) who experienced vaginal discharge. The number of women of childbearing age (WUS) in Sail District aged 15-29 years was 5,845 people, aged 15-49 years were 7,707 people, and 30-50 years were 4,181 people. The results of the initial interview conducted on December 15, 2022 with women of childbearing age in the working area of the Sail Health Center found that 3 out of 5 women of childbearing age experienced physiological vaginal discharge with the criteria of vaginal discharge with not

much quantity, clear color, runny consistency, no smell, and no taste itchy. While 2 other people had pathological vaginal discharge with the criteria of vaginal discharge in large quantities, grayish white in color, there was also milky white to yellowish color mixed with blood, thick concentration, fishy smell, with complaints of itching. Of the 5 informants, some of them have treated their vaginal discharge by keeping their genitals clean, washing their vaginas with clean water and using vaginal cleansing soap. Observation results also found that the living environment is clean.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach and was carried out in the Work Area of the Sail Health Center, Pekanbaru in May 2023. The informants for this study were five people who were determined based on the level of data saturation/saturation and were selected using the maximum variation sampling technique, the informant criteria were women of childbearing age who were married, had carried out IVA examinations in the working area of the Sail Health Center, had experienced physiological and pathological vaginal discharge, participants were able to communicate well and were easily understood by researchers and signed informed consent as proof of their willingness to become participants. The focus of the research includes the experiences of informants in dealing with physiological and pathological vaginal discharge. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically through several stages, including creating and reading transcripts repeatedly, coding, making categories, formulating themes, integrating the results of analysis into descriptive form, and presenting data in narrative form and quotations from informants' statements.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

Based on the research results, there were five participants in this study. Two people had physiological vaginal discharge and three people had pathological vaginal discharge. Two themes were found in the results of this study, namely, 1) physical and psychological complaints of vaginal discharge, 2) Efforts and effectiveness in overcoming vaginal discharge.

1. Physical and Psychological Complaints of Leucorrhoea. Pertispan in this study revealed physical and psychological complaints when experiencing leucorrhoea, complaints that are felt are divided into two, namely complaints that do not bother and complaints that bother.
 - a. Physical and psychological complaints of physiological vaginal discharge. The physical complaints in question are complaints that don't bother you when you experience vaginal discharge. As experienced by the participants when they experienced vaginal discharge that didn't smell, didn't itch, just had a normal color. Following are the participant's expressions: "... Personally, you don't have much vaginal discharge, but you still get wet in your underwear, don't smell, don't itch, and don't have a lot of lumps like that. As is normal, vaginal discharge is colorless too..." (P5) "...the smell is normal, it doesn't bother you..." (P4) "...If you don't disturb your sleep..." (P5). Psychological complaints that are felt are not disturbing, as expressed by participants. The vaginal discharge that is experienced is not disturbing because the smell does not get to the smell of other people The following are the participants' expressions: "Because you feel that the vaginal discharge that you are experiencing is normal, there are no complaints of smell, itchiness that triggers it is not normal, it doesn't bother you normally. because I've never been like someone who's sorry for the smell that other people smell..."(P5). Not feeling inferior, not worried, not bothered by vaginal discharge. Making the psychological state of these participants not disturbed when experiencing vaginal

discharge. Following are the participant's expressions: "...Don't feel disturbed and don't feel insecure when you are close to your husband or friend..." (P4) "...Not worried about vaginal discharge..." (P5)

- b. Physical and psychological complaints of pathological vaginal discharge. Complaints felt by participants when they experienced vaginal discharge were physical complaints such as blue vaginal discharge, yellow vaginal discharge, smelly vaginal discharge, itchy vaginal discharge, lumpy vaginal discharge, disturbing sleep, burning during intercourse, pale and thin body. Here are the participants' expressions: "...Sometimes it's lumpy, sometimes it turns blue, sometimes it's yellow, sometimes it smells, sometimes itches..." (P1) "...When you sit down, you feel it coming out, it feels itchy. when you take a shower that afternoon, wash it clean and replace everything..." (P2) "...Not so much, but there's a smell that makes you uncomfortable. You have to change your underwear..." (P3) "...had trouble sleeping, but it's not too bad. You have to watch your food so it doesn't itch..." (P3) it hurts..." (P2) "... before fasting, mother was thin, pale because of the amount of vaginal discharge. And reminded the puskesmas to take medicine..." (P1). Psychological complaints experienced by participants such as feeling uncomfortable being close to people such as neighbors/friends, and even their own husbands. Here are the participant's expressions: "...another smell, less pleasant. Sometimes if you don't change your underpants, sitting close to someone, you can smell it, sometimes if you go near your father (husband), you avoid..." (P2). "...Later, when you go to the neighbor's house, you will be ridiculed for urinating because you are wet. That's why you use pads. Those thin pads..." (P1)

2. Efforts and effectiveness in overcoming leucorrhoea. Pertispan in this study reveals the efforts and effectiveness in overcoming vaginal discharge that is experienced. Efforts are made in the form of natural self-cleaning, taking natural medicines, taking medical drugs, and other efforts to overcome vaginal discharge, both physiological and pathological.

- a. Efforts and effectiveness in overcoming physiological vaginal discharge. The effort and effectiveness referred to by the researcher are the methods that have been used by the participants and the effectiveness of the methods that have been used by the participants in overcoming the vaginal discharge they have experienced. There were several attempts that the participants used to overcome leucorrhoea, namely, using betel leaf decoction, washing with warm water, washing with lime juice, and changing underwear. Here are the participants' expressions: "...Mother uses betel leaf decoction, then mother washes it. The result is that the itch disappears when you are pregnant. The vaginal discharge..." (P4) "...During pregnancy, if you get wet, you just change your underwear often, because if it gets wet it makes you uncomfortable. Then my brother used to wash himself with warm water, and then he also used lime to be squeezed into the water and then poured on..." (P5). Participants who experience normal vaginal discharge make efforts to prevent vaginal discharge so they are comfortable. They do not get medical treatment for their vaginal discharge. Following are the participant's expressions: "...Nobody can get medicine from the health workers..." (P4) "...If there is no medicine from the health workers, at most only betel leaves are boiled to be pounded. Then my sister used a pentilliner, but only to keep her panties from getting on her..." (P5). As a result of efforts to overcome leucorrhoea with betel leaves, squeeze lime juice to make the vaginal area tight and not slippery. Following are the participant's expressions: "...The benefit you get is that it makes the mat not slippery anymore. Even though the vaginal discharge will appear again, it's just comfortable when you wash it with warm water or lime juice..." (P5).

- b. Efforts and effectiveness of overcoming pathological vaginal discharge. Various attempts have been made to overcome vaginal discharge. Starting from natural remedies to medical treatment. The results of the perceived treatment also vary. Efforts for treatment are carried out using natural remedies such as using warm water, using betel nut soap, using boiled betel leaves, using clean water, using rhizome concoctions, and changing underwear. Following are the participants' expressions: "...Because of the itching too, until the mother cooks hot water, she then washes it with the warm water. Can't sleep because of itching and pain too..." (P1). "...Yesterday my mother also used betel nut soap, but the doctor prohibited it. You can change your underwear four times a day because it's damp..." (P1) "...Mother drink turmeric, betel nut, basically pa what our people suggest to do. But after that what the mother felt was even more useful taking medicine (medical) because taking the concoction didn't taste anything but it still hurts too..." (P1) "...just frequently wash to the bathroom using clean water, then change your underwear. ..." (P2) "...Some say to the mother to take seven betel leaves, boil them, then rub them in..."(P2) "...Like turmeric, galingale, ginger, mother, boil the blender, filter it, add brown sugar and tamarind like that, if this herbal medicine only reduces vaginal discharge..." (P3). In addition to the natural medicines taken by the participants, they also received treatment from health workers to treat vaginal discharge. Following are the participants' expressions: "...When I first checked into the puskesmas there was vaginal discharge. After that I checked with the PMC hospital doctor. I checked it, it was just an inflammation of the vagina, I was given medicine..." (P3) "...the color of the vaginal discharge is a bit cloudy now it is thick, I have been given medicine from the puskesmas and it has decreased..." (P2) "...mother is now taking medicine from the doctor, it's different from what the mother ate yesterday from the puskesmas, something was inserted into the vagina too..." (P1). The results of the treatment using natural medicines felt by the participants, namely, increased itching and some felt that their bodies felt light after using natural medicines. The following are the participants' expressions: "...After the mother used a wipe with betel water it itched more, since then I no longer wanted to use betel leaf..." (P2) "...the body feels light when you drink the herbs, but the vaginal discharge is still there..." (P1). Meanwhile, the results of the medical treatment felt by the participants were reduced vaginal discharge, dry vaginal discharge. Following are the participants' expressions: "... yesterday after taking the medicine the excessive vaginal discharge disappeared for a long time, the itching also decreased. I've run out of the medicine, I haven't taken the medicine in a long time, the vaginal discharge is itching again..." (P2) "...The vaginal discharge has decreased after taking the medicine, but if you stop taking the medicine, you will have more vaginal discharge. That's why now they only depend on medicine..." (P1) "...after treatment there is no vaginal discharge anymore. If you drink herbal medicine, you still have something to drink to deal with the bad smell, that's all..." (P3)

Discussion

The results of interviews with two (2) participants indicated that there were physical complaints that did not bother participants who experienced "Normal Leucorrhoea". The concept of normal leucorrhoea or physiological leucorrhoea is that the secretory fluid is clear, not sticky and watery, does not emit a pungent odor, this symptom is a normal process (Riza et al., 2019). The results of the study of 2 (two) participants revealed that the vaginal discharge they experienced did not smell, did not itch, was colorless, and also did not interfere with the participants' comfort when experiencing vaginal discharge.

According to Sunyanto (2014) vaginal discharge has a major influence on the psychology of the sufferer, if this vaginal discharge lasts a long time and causes an unpleasant odor, the sufferer will feel insecure. Apart from being psychological, vaginal discharge also affects the physical condition of the sufferer, such as causing itching in the intimate area, pain and discomfort. For women who are married, this condition greatly affects sexual life because of an unpleasant odor and vaginal discharge which makes it uncomfortable during sexual intercourse.

Based on the results of interviews, three (3) participants expressed physical complaints that they felt, namely vaginal discharge that was blue, yellow, gray, itchy, smelly, lumpy, difficult to sleep, sore during intercourse, thin and pale body. So that the participants also had psychological complaints as a result of the physical complaints presented by the participants. The psychological complaints described by the participants were that they closed themselves off to be close to other people for fear of smelling or looking wet in their underwear. Married women are more sensitive when they are close to their husbands, if they have excessive vaginal discharge, they feel embarrassed and avoid their husbands.

Based on the results of a study of two (2) female participants of childbearing age (WUS) overcoming "Normal Leucorrhoea" in a natural way without medical treatment. The natural way that the participants in this study did was use boiled betel leaves in a cup, ordinary water mixed with lime and then rubbed, and often changing their underwear when they had vaginal discharge. Based on the results of research conducted by Kustanti (2017) in line with the results of this study that giving betel leaf decoction is effective in reducing the incidence of leucorrhoea. The benefits and efficacy of betel leaf in overcoming leucorrhoea, namely reducing vaginal discharge and protecting female organs because betel leaves contain antiseptics. Participants revealed that plain water plus lime and then rubbed was able to overcome leucorrhoea. Participants said that after using lime to wipe it felt tight in the vagina. And make the vagina not slippery anymore and feel more comfortable after using this method. In addition, vaginal discharge can be overcome with simple things, such as protecting the genital organs. One of them diligently changing underwear. Humid conditions will foster the growth of fungi which result in vaginal discharge (Hidayah, Sari, & Peu, 2021). Attempts to deal with vaginal discharge range from natural remedies and medical treatment. Various types of traditional medicine to treat leucorrhoea include betel leaves, rose root, rhizome roots, turmeric, and basil leaves (Azizah & Dewi, 2020). Based on the results of interviews, three (3) participants revealed how to deal with pathological vaginal discharge in a natural way using warm water, using a vaginal cleanser, drinking concoctions of turmeric, kencur, ginger, betel leaf decoction, cleaning the vagina with clean water. Based on research conducted by Ethnic and Maay (2021) it can be said that betel leaf boiled water is effective for reducing or reducing symptoms of pathological vaginal discharge. This also shows that there is a decrease in the value of vaginal discharge after treatment. Betel leaf decoction is proven to relieve itching, fishy smell, and reduce vaginal discharge. Based on the results of research conducted by Sibero, Sartika, & Simanjuntak (2021) stated that after consuming turmeric boiled water there is a change when experiencing pathological vaginal discharge, this can occur because of the benefits of turmeric which is used for various treatments, one of which is for vaginal discharge or candidiasis. What is used is the rhizome which contains essential oils and 3-5% curcumin. Essential oils and curcumin have been shown to heal wounds and inhibit the activity of pathogenic fungi. Participants revealed that using the concoctions they made could only reduce vaginal discharge, but did not reduce symptoms such as pain or itching in the vagina. Apart from the natural medicines used by the participants, they also used medical drugs obtained from the puskesmas or hospital. According to what has been disclosed by the

Sail Health Center, participants who have visited the Health Center with complaints of vaginal discharge that itch, smell, and feel uncomfortable with this situation will be given medicine with the dose and amount according to the patient's complaints.

The results of the interviews revealed by the participants regarding the medical treatment they received were the participants saying that after using the medicines from the puskesmas and hospital the vaginal discharge that smelled, itchy, and bothered was gone. Participants revealed that the drugs they obtained were able to overcome the vaginal discharge they experienced. However, participants also said that when the drug ran out they returned to feel complaints of vaginal discharge like before taking the drug.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion regarding the experiences of women of childbearing age (WUS) in dealing with vaginal discharge (Fluor Albus) involving five participants in the working area of the Sail Health Center, it was concluded that there were two participants experiencing physiological vaginal discharge and three participants experiencing pathological vaginal discharge. The experiences of physiological and pathological participants differ in dealing with the vaginal discharge they experience. Physical and psychological complaints that do not bother participants such as vaginal discharge that does not smell, does not itch so that they do not experience psychological complaints because they are not bothered by the presence of vaginal discharge. While physical complaints that bother them are vaginal discharge that smells bad, itchy, gray in color, yellow, so they also experience disturbing psychological complaints such as not being confident in being close to people, such as neighbors, friends and even their own husbands who avoid them more. Participants overcome physiological leucorrhoea without medical drugs, they only use natural medicines such as boiled betel leaves which are rubbed, then use lime juice mixed with water and then rubbed. Participants said that what they did was able to overcome the vaginal discharge they experienced. Meanwhile, the efforts made by the participants when overcoming pathological vaginal discharge or what they call "Disease Leucorrhoea" are natural and medical remedies. Before receiving medical treatment, the participants took natural remedies, such as using a decoction of betel leaves, concoctions of turmeric, ginger, and kencur. The result of natural treatment that is felt is reduced vaginal discharge but symptoms such as itching, pain do not decrease. It's different with the medical treatment they got from the Puskesmas and the hospital, the results they felt after doing the treatment for leucorrhoea were no longer there and the complaints were also gone. However, there were participants who could not stop taking medication.

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