

The COVID-19 Rapid and Swab Tests Takes the Lives of Pregnant Women and Their Babies: Does It Violate Human Rights?

To the Editor:

There was recently awful news in Indonesia, namely a feud between a famous artist named Jerinx (as a drummer of Superman Is Dead band) and IDI (Ikatan Dokter Indonesia or Indonesian Doctors Association). IDI reported Jerinx to the Indonesian police on charges of defamation that he posted on Instagram. The police charged Jerinx with Article 28 Paragraph (2) of the Information and Electronic Transactions (ITE) Law regarding hate speech to specific groups of people. He faces imprisonment for a maximum of 6 years and/or a maximum fine of Rp. 1 billion. In his interviews in various media, he said that "I am sincere if I have to be in prison, as long as after this there are no more pregnant women who will die because their children die."

It was previously known that this started because of an agreement to give birth to pregnant women who were about to give birth in Makassar, which in the end, this news shocked Indonesia. How could I not? The report occurred because the mother could not pay the cost of the swab test after being declared reactive when given the rapid test. After being transferred to several hospitals, based on a womb examination results at a polyclinic, the baby who was in the mother's womb was declared dead 2 days ago. As a result of this incident, the public in Indonesia, including Jerinx, questioned the mandatory rules for the COVID-19 test for pregnant women who were about to give birth.

Besides, if examined more deeply, the mother's psychological disorders during pregnancy can affect the fetus and have long-term consequences.^{1,2} Also, pregnant and postpartum women are particularly vulnerable to mood disorders, stress, anxiety, and

depression, affecting their babies.³ If this happens, it will harm the fetus's development during the womb and the cognitive development of the baby after birth.⁴ The most severe consequence of this psychological disorder is that it will cause death to both the mother and the fetus in the womb.⁵ Therefore, psychological assistance from medical personnel, counselors, and psychologists is needed to deal with depression and psychological pressure⁶ in pregnant and postpartum women, to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates.^{7,8}

I hope this article can be a real effort of prayer for the nation,^{9,10} and it can help the Government of Indonesia through the covid-19.go.id website so that it can provide exemptions from rapid and swab tests for pregnant women. This is intended so that pregnant women do not experience psychological problems during pregnancy and the process of giving birth so that no more mothers will die or mothers who die with a child in their womb.

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