EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF HEALTH CARD PROGRAM ON ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES: AN INDONESIAN EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT:

The health card program aimed to protect the poor in Indonesia during the Asian economic crisis. Health cards that would provide free access to public health services were targeted and allocated exclusively to the poor. The impact of the health card program on reproductive health services was rarely discussed by previous studies, which pay more attention on health card utilization for both inpatients and outpatients. Indonesian family life survey data (IFLS) from the RAND Corporation was constructed as balanced panel dataset with consideration of sample selection bias. This study evaluated the impact of the health card program (during the 1997-2000 Asian economic crisis) on access to reproductive health services and answered the question of whether the people who had a health card really have better access to reproductive health services. Discussion in this thesis is limited to antenatal care, place of delivery and contraceptive use, which are the only reproductive health components covered by the health card program. Using a combination of descriptive analysis and multivariate analysis, this study found that the health cards were not well targeted and distributed. Cross tabulation results show that the health cards were not distributed to the poor only and there are significant numbers of higher income households who received health cards. The logistic regressions, comparison of six different levels of modeling for each outcome variable, found that there is no significant effect of the health card program, which was detected through health card ownership and interaction, to access to adequate antenatal care and delivery at a public health facility. Additionally, the health card ownership has a positive significant effect on utilization of modern contraception although there is no interaction effect between health cards ownership and program intervention periods on modern contraceptive use. Good targeting, monitoring and evaluation system as well as social marketing and community are very important to improve the effectiveness of any further social safety net program.

KEY WORDS: HEALTH CARD/ ANTENATAL CARE/ CONTRACEPTIVE/ PLACE OF DELIVERY

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