ABSTRACT

The research aimed to understand the treatment and medicines use behavior for acute respiratory infection (ARI) in children under five years old in urban slum areas, and to understand how the living context in urban poor slum areas, pharmaceutical advertisements and other information influences those behaviors. Data was collected by conducting interviews with key informants, through in-depth interviews with 20 mothers from the community who have children under five years old with ARI symptoms within a month prior, and by observation and collection of relevant data. The community living in an urban slum area in Depok municipality, Indonesia was chosen as the research location.

This study revealed the background of the urban community: originally from rural areas, with a lack of skills and low education, which led them to live in unhygienic environmental conditions, and to face difficult economic lives. Not having a Depok ID card prevented them from getting free health services and financial support from the government.

ARI has been a common experience among the families studied. They have their own perception regarding the symptoms, cause and severity. The efficacy of medicines is interpreted using their own cultural beliefs and the way they use medicines is also based on their own way, which is related to limited knowledge, improper communication with health providers and the influence of pharmaceutical advertisements. Living in poor conditions restrains them from getting appropriate health services, thus the way they manage ARI is in the most affordable way, mainly using self-medication or going to community health center.

This study suggests that the experience of ARI and medication can not be understood unless the structural factors are analyzed. Therefore, providing education is not enough unless living conditions and health services are improved.

KEY WORDS: ARI / CHILDREN / MEDICINES USE / URBAN POVERTY / CRITICAL MEDICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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