

Editorial

PUBLIC HEALTH SIGNIFICANCE OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES

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Public health science is experiencing a rapid development of clinical and specific studies which provide extensive knowledge to answer challenges in our society today. Various regions such as urban, rural, mountainous and coastal areas, and various characteristics of people have become the attentions of public health scholars and practitioners to think critically to provide new approach in the community.

In this editorial, I would like to address coastal areas that should be a new concern for public health in Indonesia. The area that lies between land and sea, encompassing the entire coastal plain, continental shelf and waters, as well as bays, estuaries, lagoons, dune fields and deltas ([Dahuri, Rais, Ginting, & Sitepu, 1996](#); [Ketchum, 1972](#)), has become the new living zone as a result of a population shift from industrial areas to coastal zones ([Cendrero & Fischer, 1997](#)). However, people living in this area are more likely poor communities with poor access to health services ([Tosepu, Effendy, Bahar, Lestari, & Asfian, 2016](#)). Therefore, public health issue in coastal area remains significant, and the existence of public health professionals is needed.

However, to serve this community, we firstly need to understand the coastal areas. [Post and Lundin \(1996\)](#) share the issues and aspects of coastal zones such as 1) a dynamic area with frequently changing biological, chemical, and geological attributes, 2) coastal zone features such as coral reefs, plantations, and coastal and dune systems function as natural defenses against storms, floods and erosion, 3) coastal ecosystems can act to moderate the effects of soil pollution (such as wetlands absorb excess nutrients, sediment, human waste), and 4) the beach attracts extensive human settlement because of its proximity to marine and non-marine life.

With those aspects, the concepts that we should learn are likely related to the interaction between characteristics of the coastal areas and public health, which uses approaches to coastal environmental health, coastal health services, coastal epidemiology, nutrition of coastal community health, and disease in coastal communities, by prioritizing strategies of collaboration, community empowerment in achieving optimal health status.

As there is a dearth of studies exploring public health in these areas, specifically in Indonesia, I do hope that in the future many research will exist, especially in *Public Health of Indonesia*, which will provide new approaches to help our community. To sum up, as a public health scholar, I do not forget to emphasize that public health is science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting physical health and efficiency through organized community efforts for the sanitation of the environment, control of community infections, education of the individual in principles of personal hygiene, organization of medical and nursing services for the early diagnosis and preventive treatment of disease, and development of social machinery which will ensure to every individual in the community a standard of living adequate for the maintenance of health ([Winslow, 1920](#)).

Declaration of Conflicting Interest

There is no conflict of interest for this article.

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