

## **PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AND NURSES IN INDONESIA: ARE WE PARTNERS?**

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**Accepted:** 27 May 2016

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Sir,

The context of environment and other individuals has been a focus of public health and nurse's profession. Promoting the health, preventing disease, and prolonging life are the roles of these professions. However, there has been role confusion between public health professionals and nurses in Indonesia, which may lead to uneasy cooperation and complex interaction. In addition, it has also been a phenomenon in education that many Diploma nurses continue their education in Public Health Institution, which may impact to the threat of losing professional identity and status of public health.

To answer this, the understanding about the basic knowledge about the two professions may be needed. Public health refers to "the science and art of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health through organizations, public and

private, communities, and individuals."<sup>1</sup> It incorporates with the interdisciplinary approaches of epidemiology, health services, biostatistics, environmental health, community health, behavioral health, health economics, public policy, mental health, and occupational safety and health.

Public health practice today requires multidisciplinary team that is not only from nurses, but also physicians who are specializing in public health, midwives, nutritionists, pharmacists, psychologists, epidemiologists, dentists, and others. It may be said that nurses is a part of public health. These nurses are often called as "Public health nurses", coined by Lillian Wald, having nursing specialty focused on public health.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, if looking at the history of nursing professions founded by Florence Nightingale, an early pioneer in

epidemiology. Nursing has been recognized as the prevention focus beyond her effort. She also advanced the science of public health on sanitation, surveillance and her dedication to social reform. During the Crimean War her statistical records on the living conditions of the soldiers demonstrated the relationship between sanitation and the presence of disease.<sup>3</sup>

Nowadays, nurses provide the key components of public health interventions including well baby care, health education, screening and immunization clinics, disaster management and emergency preparedness. It could be stated that nurses has an important role in public health, and can influence the individual's public health, community and the population. Public health seems to be a core to all nursing practice, and becomes every nurse's responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

In conclusion that public health professionals and nurses are partners in nature to improve health and quality of life of population.

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**Cite this article as:** Gunawan J. Public Health Professionals and Nurses in Indonesia: Are We Partner? *Public Health of Indonesia* 2016; 2(2): 112-113