

## Perspective and Perception of Latah among Junior High School Student in Jakarta, Indonesia

Dina Faizah\*, Fia A. Mutiksa\*\*, Randy S.N. Rusdy\*\*\*, Eka S. Nugraha\*\*\*\*, Martina W.S. Nasrun\*\*\*\*\*, Elisna Syahrudin\*\*\*\*\*, Indah S. Widyahening\*\*\*\*\*

Faculty of Medicine Universitas, Indonesia

### Introduction

Latah is a curious mental state, seemingly localized to Malaysia and Indonesia where a person gets wound-up to such a degree that they show an exaggerated startle response, are highly suggestible, and may produce unintentional words, movement or behavior sequences when provoked by others. The condition is described by Western psychiatry as a culture-bound syndrome although the medical literature has had an ongoing debate about whether other cultures have the same phenomenon under a different name. Anthropologists have often refer to the psychiatric definition of Latah as a syndrome. The aim of study is to obtain a perspective of Latah among junior high school student in Indonesia and their perception towards Latah phenomenon besides look at prevalence.

### Method

A cross-sectional study was done on a total of 113 students in 13 *Junior High School*, Jakarta, during May 2013. The sampling method was consecutive sampling. Data was obtained by direct questionnaire. Data were analyzed by chi-square tests.

### Results

The prevalence of Latah among junior high school

student was 19,5%. None of the Latah sufferer seeks any professional help. Most of respondents know about Latah (62,8%). Type of latah mostly was echolalia, the rest was in combination echolalia and echopraxia. There were significant association between latah and women ( $p=0,040$ ), latah in family member ( $p = 0,012$ ), latah in surroundings ( $p = 0,026$ ). Perception of Latah is varied; most of respondents consider Latah as a disease (62,8%), disturbing (83,2%), embarrassing (86,8%), curable (87,6%), funny and entertaining (89,4%). Meanwhile only few respondents agreed that Latah is dangerous (40,5%), infectious (23,2%), due to genetics (34,9%), make the people famous (46,4%), should be pitied (37,5%).

### Conclusion

Latah phenomenon was quite well known, is still exist in Indonesia, mostly sufferer is women. However, none of the Latah sufferer seeks any professional help, even though they think it is a disease and curable.

**Key words:** Latah; Indonesia; Perception; Perspective; Student.