

FAMILY PERCEPTION OF SCRAPING THERAPY AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO TRADITIONAL TREATMENT

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Abstract

Scraping therapy, known locally as kerokan, is a traditional treatment still widely practiced in Indonesia to address minor ailments such as colds, muscle aches, and fever. Family perceptions strongly influence the preference for scraping therapy as a primary form of home care. This study aims to explore how families perceive scraping therapy as an alternative to modern medicine. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving participants who had received or administered scraping therapy in the past year, were aged 18 or older, and participated voluntarily. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs), focusing on their knowledge, motivations, and personal experiences. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify key patterns and meanings. The findings revealed that many families consider scraping therapy effective, affordable, and easy to perform. It is viewed as a cultural tradition passed down through generations and a practical solution amid limited access to healthcare facilities. Nevertheless, some concerns were noted, including potential skin irritation and the absence of scientific validation. Despite these issues, cultural beliefs and accessibility make scraping therapy the preferred choice for minor health problems. Healthcare professionals should educate communities while respecting local traditions to ensure safe practices.

Keywords: Family perception, Public health, Scraping therapy, Traditional medicine.

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1. Introduction

One of the main goals in health development is to create a healthy life for everyone so that society can achieve the best possible health. Posyandu is a form of Community-Based Health Effort (UKBM) organized and run by the community, with the aim of increasing empowerment and facilitating access to basic health services [1]. This program

focuses on mothers and children and plays a role in increasing public knowledge about various forms of health care, including traditional medicine such as scraping therapy, which is still widely practiced in family environments [2].

The family plays an important role in decision-making regarding treatment efforts for family members who experience minor health complaints. One

common practice is scraping therapy, a traditional treatment method that is believed to relieve symptoms of colds, aches and pains, and fever. As the smallest unit in society, the family is the main actor in preserving this tradition. The perception of family members, be it husbands, parents, or other family members, also determines whether scraping therapy is chosen as an alternative treatment or not.

In Indonesia, the use of traditional medicine such as scraping therapy is still very common, although some people are starting to switch to modern medicine. However, varying understandings about the benefits and risks of scraping therapy make this practice an interesting topic to study. Data from Riskesdas 2010 shows that the use of traditional medicine, including scraping therapy, is still high in various regions. This shows the need to further understand the perception of the community, especially families, towards the use of these traditional methods [3].

Lack of understanding about the side effects or limitations of keropok as a form of treatment can also have an impact on an individual's health. Although considered safe and natural, the practice of keropok can cause effects such as skin irritation or worsen certain conditions if not done correctly. Therefore, the family's perception and knowledge about this practice is very important to understand as a basis for proper education [4].

Families have great potential in preserving or even criticizing traditional healing practices such as scraping therapy. Therefore, it is important to know how they perceive the effectiveness and safety of this method, as well as what factors drive them to choose scraping therapy over medical treatment. This knowledge can be the basis for an educational approach that respects local culture but still prioritizes the safety and effectiveness of treatment [5].

The low level of family understanding regarding the medical aspects of scraping therapy often makes

people believe more in experiences or myths that are passed down from generation to generation. Factors such as education level, access to information, and previous experiences influence the family's perception of this practice. Therefore, efforts are needed to explore community perceptions more deeply in order to find out to what extent the practice of scraping therapy is considered a viable health solution [6].

In 2019, the use of traditional medicine in Indonesia, including scraping therapy, was still quite high. Although there is no specific data on the number of families using scraping therapy, field findings indicate that this practice is widely used in households, including in DKI Jakarta. This shows that family perceptions of scraping therapy remain relevant to study so that they can be used as considerations in the preparation of contextual health education policies [7].

In Central Java, especially in Slawi District, many people still use scraping therapy as an alternative treatment. In several sub-districts such as Kudaile, Pangkah, Procot and others, the practice of scraping therapy is carried out routinely in the midst of the family. In Kudaile Sub-district, it is known that this practice is still believed and practiced by most families in treating family members who experience symptoms of colds or fatigue [8].

Based on an initial survey of 20 families in Kudaile Village, Slawi District, as many as 15 families (75%) still choose scraping therapy as first aid for minor complaints such as colds and aches. This study aims to explore family perceptions of scraping therapy as a traditional treatment and the factors that influence it. The results are expected to be useful for the community, health workers, and researchers as a basis for understanding, education, and developing further studies.

2. Methods

This study uses a case study approach to describe the practice of

scraping therapy as part of traditional health care in the Kelurahan Baru area. The purpose of this study is to understand how scraping therapy is carried out in families, what the reasons are for its use, and how the community perceives the benefits and risks of the practice.

The data collection method was conducted through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) with individuals who had undergone or performed scraping therapy, as well as family members involved in the practice. This approach was chosen to obtain comprehensive and in-depth information regarding cultural background, health understanding, and direct experience related to scraping therapy.

The research informants consisted of community members who had experience in using or performing scraping therapy, both as recipients and as actors. The selection of informants was carried out purposively to obtain various views related to the use of scraping therapy in the context of family health care. A total of 5 families were interviewed in depth, while 8 participants from the community who routinely use scraping therapy participated in the FGD to explore their experiences collectively. Additional FGDs also involved 6 participants from community groups who were familiar with the practice of scraping therapy but did not actively use it.

This study was conducted from November 2024 to January 2025. Data from interviews and FGDs were thoroughly transcribed and analyzed using coding techniques. Furthermore, the data were categorized and coded using qualitative data analysis software. The analysis was done in steps to find common ideas, trends, and connections between how people view, use, and understand scraping therapy. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of narratives, tables, and diagrams to provide a complete picture of the position of scraping therapy in traditional community health practices.

3. Results and Discussion

Factors Influencing the Practice of Scraping in the Family

In the context of traditional medicine practices in society, scraping therapy is still the main choice in families to overcome various minor health complaints. This practice not only reflects a tradition that has been passed down from generation to generation, but is also part of a collective belief about how to care for the body naturally.

Belief in the effectiveness of scraping therapy and cultural heritage passed down from generation to generation are the main factors influencing the practice of scraping therapy [9]. Based on the results of in-depth interviews with several families in the Kelurahan, it was found that most respondents stated that they believe that scraping therapy can help expel "wind" from the body and reduce symptoms such as colds, aches, and mild fever. A housewife said, "*Since I was little, my mother used to have me scraping therapy, and now I also do it to my children when they have a fever.*"

In addition to belief and tradition factors, aspects of ease of access and affordability are also important considerations. Many families feel that cupping is a quick, practical, and economical solution compared to going to a health facility, especially for complaints that are considered not serious. This finding is in line with previous research by [10] which states that traditional medicine is chosen because it is considered more accessible to the community, both economically and geographically.

However, awareness is starting to emerge among the public about the

potential risks of the scraping therapy practice. Some families are now considering the medical and safety aspects, especially after receiving information from health workers. A male respondent said, *"I used to immediately have scraping therapy if I had a headache, but now I am more careful after knowing that it can cause skin irritation or even cover up symptoms of other diseases."* This shows a shift in the public's perspective on traditional health practices, which is starting to be based on modern medical knowledge [11].

Forms of Family Support for the Practice of Scraping

The family has a central role in preserving and implementing the practice of scraping therapy as part of the traditional healing culture. In many cases, the practice of scraping therapy is carried out cooperatively among family members, such as a husband scraping his wife, or parents scraping their children. This activity not only functions as a simple medical action, but also as a moment of togetherness and an expression of affection, so that it becomes part of the home care routine [12].

A housewife explained her experience, *"If my child complains of a cold, I usually do the scraping using eucalyptus oil and coins. While being scraped, we also chat, so we feel closer."* This statement indicates that the scraping practice also has social and psychological functions, in addition to the physical aspects.

In addition to the implementation aspect, the family is also the main medium for transferring knowledge between generations regarding the scraping therapy technique that is considered effective, such as determining the body part to be scraped, the direction

of the scratches, and the materials used. This process of passing on knowledge strengthens the sustainability of the scraping therapy practice in the family [13].

However, some families have begun to show adaptation patterns by combining the practice of scraping therapy with modern medicine. For example, scraping therapy is performed after administering fever-reducing drugs to increase the effectiveness of symptom management. This illustrates the syncretism between tradition and modern health science that runs side by side in daily practice in the community [14].

Challenges in Implementing Scraping therapy Practices

Although the practice of scraping therapy is still widely maintained in society, there are several significant challenges faced in its implementation, especially in the modern era today. One of the main challenges is the lack of knowledge regarding the side effects or risks that may arise from scraping therapy. Several respondents expressed their ignorance regarding the potential for serious bruising to the risk of covering up symptoms of more serious diseases, which can lead to misdiagnosis when seeking treatment at a health facility [15].

A family member said, *"I thought bruising after keropuk was normal. But it turns out it can also lead to misdiagnosis if we go to the doctor."* This statement reflects the importance of better education about the risks and limitations of keropuk practices so as not to endanger health.

In addition, the stigma from some communities and medical personnel who consider scraping therapy as an unscientific practice is also an obstacle to the sustainability of this practice. This

stigma causes some families, especially the younger generation, to hesitate to continue or practice scraping therapy independently [5].

Another challenge faced is the limited information on how to do keropat safely and correctly. This is felt quite difficult by young families who do not have enough experience or knowledge in carrying out keropat practices, so that it has the potential to cause health risks if done carelessly [16].

Family Strategies in Adapting to Scraping therapy Practices

In response to the challenges that arise, some families adopt adaptive strategies so that the practice of scraping therapy can still be carried out safely and effectively. One strategy implemented is to seek information and consultation from trusted sources, such as midwives, health center staff, or other health workers, regarding the right time to do scraping therapy and when to switch to modern medical treatment [17].

One respondent stated, *“I now prefer to have scraping therapy if the symptoms are mild, such as aches or chills. But if I have a high fever, I go straight to the doctor.”* This indicates an increased awareness of the importance of recognizing the limitations of traditional practices and the role of modern medicine in maintaining family health.

In addition, families also began to apply the principle of caution in the implementation of scraping therapy, such as reducing pressure when scraping, ensuring the cleanliness of the materials used, and limiting the area of the body that is scraped to only parts that are considered safe. Some families even replace traditional scraping therapy tools with smoother and safer objects to avoid wounds or skin irritation.

These strategies reflect the family's efforts to maintain traditions that are considered beneficial, while adapting to developments in medical knowledge and awareness of health safety.

Impact of Scraping Practices on Family Health Dynamics

The practice of cupping has a significant impact on health dynamics within the family. In addition to providing a physical relaxation effect, this practice also strengthens emotional relationships between family members. The cupping moment is often interpreted as a form of attention and care, and creates togetherness in dealing with minor health complaints. This finding is in line with research by [18] which states that traditional healing practices, including scraping therapy, have an important role in strengthening social interactions within the family and providing a sense of psychological comfort.

As an alternative initial treatment, scraping therapy is often the main choice before families decide to seek formal health services. This shows the active role of families in making independent treatment decisions, as well as the belief in the effectiveness of traditional methods.

However, in order for this practice not to cause health risks such as irritation or infection, it requires a proper understanding of how and the limits of its use. With ongoing education and an approach that respects local cultural values, the practice of scraping therapy can be maintained as part of a safe and responsible family care culture.

However, the sustainability of this practice must be supported by proper understanding so as not to pose a health risk. With the right approach and continuous education, the practice of

scraping therapy can be maintained as part of a safe and responsible family health care culture. Integration of traditional knowledge and modern health principles is needed to ensure the safety and well-being of family members.

4. Conclusion

This study effectively elucidates family perceptions of scraping therapy and the factors influencing its continued use. Scraping therapy is perceived as an effective, practical, and affordable treatment option, deeply rooted in familial traditions and emotional bonds. Its popularity is further reinforced by its accessibility, low cost, and the limited availability of formal healthcare services in certain regions. These elements collectively contribute to its preference as a primary home-based remedy for minor ailments. However, findings also indicate an emerging awareness among families regarding the potential risks associated with scraping therapy, such as skin irritation and the absence of standardized clinical evidence. This growing awareness reflects a shift toward a more balanced perspective, wherein traditional practices are increasingly being evaluated through a modern health lens. The integration of cultural practices with biomedical principles is therefore essential. With appropriate health education that respects cultural values, scraping therapy can continue to be utilized safely and responsibly, serving as a complementary approach to conventional healthcare, particularly in communities where access to medical facilities remains limited.

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