

### "Am I high risk for HIV-AIDS .....?"



Dr. Indah is conducting counseling to a pregnant woman

"HIV.....? AIDS .....? I have heard about it. It is an uncured disease. It affects people who has bad sexual behaviour". These responses were raised by most of pregnant women after hearing explanation from Ibu Lili, nurse of Banyu Urip Health Center. She explained on HIV-AIDS to a group meeting of pregnant women and asked them whether or not they are vulnerable to contract HIV-AIDS. This reply indicates lack of knowledge on HIV-AIDS among women which then cause lack of awareness of their vulnerability to the problem.

East Java has been considered as the second most prevalence province toward HIV-AIDS epidemic in Indonesia. It has also been stated as concentrated epidemic level area. Those situations cause high possibility of HIV transmission to people in East Java, especially women whom their spouses have high possibility to contact with the virus. "... It is true. They (pregnant women) are vulnerable because husbands of many pregnant women who visited Banyu Urip Health Center have worked out of town and left their family frequently. We know what men usually do when they are away from their wife..... Moreover, there is also a brothel complex close from here. Many men have worked there .....", said dr. Indah, one of medical doctor in Banyu Urip Health Center who participated in the Prevention Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) Training for Health Center staff funded by UNICEF.

Even though there is no exact prevalence data on HIV transmission from mothers to children in East Java, however the evidence has increased. Many studies revealed that HIV can transmit from mother who has been infected by the virus to her baby during pregnancy, during delivery and after delivery as well. The transmission can be lowered by treating infected pregnant woman with ARV (anti retro viral) drugs. The earlier the infected mother was detected then gets treatment the more effective the prevention is. So, detecting infected pregnant women in early time is very valuable to the prevention of transmission. Prof. Dr. Eri Gumilar, Obstetric and Gynecology specialist at Dr. Soetomo Hospital said: "Last time, when I did a surgical operation of a mother with HIV, two other pregnant women with HIV were waiting for delivering their babies also. It seems that in the near future the incidence of women who need special treatment will increase rapidly. I think it is a very valuable effort if UNICEF can support a programme to prevent this case through promotion of PMTCT in the grass root level.

We should improve women awareness of their vulnerability towards HIV-AIDS".

Since 2006 UNICEF has worked with Provincial Health Office of East Java to run PMTCT. This support started with Training of trainers for Provincial PMTCT Facilitators. These facilitators were selected from different institutions that provide services to pregnant women in the field such as pediatrician, obstetrician, midwife and NGO staff. The Provincial Facilitators then trained District PMTCT Facilitators in 3 districts namely Malang, Banyuwangi and Tulungagung and 2 municipalities i.e. Malang and Surabaya. District Facilitators have responsibility to establish District PMTCT Team in their respective district/city and conduct training for health center staff. Health Centers were selected based on their access to VCT facilities. Then, health center staff should motivate pregnant women who check their pregnancy to voluntarily ask HIV test. Health Center staff also motivate spouses of pregnant women who are considered having high risk behaviour or condition of contracting HIV to ask HIV test.

UNICEF support on PMTCT is highly accepted by health center staff. Dr. Sri Hawati, Head of Banyu Urip Health Center said: "It is really nice to have PMTCT programme in health center. I have used this programme as centerfold. However, we face with limitation to provide cheap laboratory test for VCT. I hope UNICEF can help us to solve this problem". It could be well understood, because Dolly, the biggest brothel complex -- we call it as localization -- is only 1 km from this health center. However, cheaper and simple HIV test could be a need for all PMTCT health centers. It is not only Banyu Urip but also health centers in the areas where migrant workers come from. Can UNICEF support them?\*\*\*\*\*



Pregnant women are waiting for consultation



Ibu Lilik and a pregnant woman