WE HELP OUR OWN: COMMUNITY DRIVEN RESPONSES AND VOLUNTEERING BEHAVIOUR AMONG ORANG ASLI DURING MEASLES OUTBREAK IN KELANTAN

BACKGROUND

Indigenous Malaysians, including the Orang Asli communities, face persistent health challenges due to systemic barriers like poverty, malnutrition, poor hygiene, environmental contamination and limited access to healthcare services. The measles outbreak in Kelantan, specifically among the Bateq Tribes in Gua Musang, highlights the cultural, ecological and social complexities influencing disease prevention behaviours within these communities.

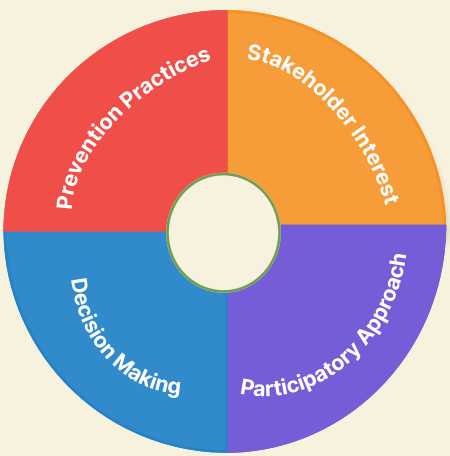
OBJECTIVE

The study aimed to understand cultural complexities influencing community participation in disease prevention among Orang Asli, focusing on the Bateq Tribes in Kelantan during a measles outbreak.

METHOD

A focused ethnographic study involving 26 respondents was conducted through semi-structured interviews and group discussions to explore experiences and behaviours within their sociocultural context.

Participation in disease prevention and control was hindered by chronic diseases, risk behaviours and underlying ecological, cultural and social determinants with varying levels of impact.



Competing priorities among the community and external stakeholders influencing healthcare access and resources.

Sociocultural dynamics shaping collective and individual choices regarding disease control measures.

Active participation in prevention efforts despite systemic and cultural hurdles.

CONCLUSION

Targeted interventions improved health literacy, preventive care and healthcare access, fostering stronger community-provider relationships. However, sustainability of these improvements remains a challenge, highlighting the need for informed strategies and policies to enhance health outcomes and reduce disease burden.

A project by Kelantan State Health Department, Department of Orang Asli Development and Institute for Health Behavioural Research (IHBR)