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Improving health in Indonesia and beyond: The legacy and contributions of Universitas Gadjah Mada, Faculty of Medicine, Public Health and Nursing

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing at Universitas Gadjah Mada (FMPHN UGM) has a rich and illustrious history dating back to its establishment in 1946. Originally known as the Faculty of Medicine, it predated establishment of Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM), which was founded in 1949 as Indonesia's first national university. From its inception, FMPHN UGM has been dedicated to training healthcare professionals and conducting research to address the health needs of Indonesia. Over the years, the Faculty has expanded its scope to include Public Health, Nutrition and Nursing programs, reflecting a commitment to an interprofessional approach to healthcare education and practice.

Throughout its history, FMPHN UGM has played a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of healthcare and healthcare professionals' education in Indonesia. It has produced generations of doctors, public health experts, nutritionists/dietitians and nurses who have gone on to serve their communities and contribute to advancements in health policy, research, and practice. The Faculty has also been at the forefront of addressing key health challenges facing Indonesia, such as infectious diseases, maternal and child health, non-communicable diseases, and disasters (e.g. tsunami, volcanic eruptions, pandemic). Its research initiatives have led to the

development of innovative interventions and solutions to improve health outcomes and promote wellbeing across the nation.

Today, we are poised to elevate to the Southeast Asian region our initiatives for training healthcare professionals, conducting cutting-edge research, and working collaboratively with communities to improve health and wellbeing. In line with this commitment, FMPHN UGM is looking forward to work through the ASEAN Medical Deans' Summit (AMDS) on three proposed strategic areas: (1) promoting social accountability of academic medical institutions in the region; (2) strengthening capacity of academic medical institutions in the region for disaster health management; (3) enhancing the role academic medical institutions to promote evidence-informed policy in the region.

II. PROMOTING SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Social accountability in medical education can be defined as: "The obligation to direct their education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority health concerns of the community, region, and/or nation they have a mandate to serve. The priority health concerns are to be identified jointly by governments, health care organisations, health professionals, and the public" (Boelen & Heck, 1995). This definition emphasises the responsibility of medical schools to align

their activities with the health needs and priorities of the communities they serve, as identified through collaborative efforts involving various stakeholders. It underscores the importance of education, research, and service in addressing these priority health concerns and promoting the overall wellbeing of society. Promoting social accountability in medical education is essential for ASEAN Medical Deans to fulfil their mandate of producing competent, compassionate, and socially responsible healthcare professionals who can effectively address the health needs of the Southeast Asian region.

For many decades, FMPHN UGM has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting social accountability in health professionals' education through various experiences and achievements: (1) implementing community-based education programs that provide students with opportunities to engage directly with communities and address their health needs; (2) establishing partnerships with local communities, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations to identify and address priority health concerns; (3) integrating social accountability principles into the curricula of medical, public health, nutrition and nursing programs; (4) conducting research that addresses pressing health issues facing Indonesian communities. Overall, the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing at Universitas Gadjah Mada has demonstrated a strong commitment to promoting social accountability in medical education through its community-based education programs, partnerships with communities, curricular integration, research for social impact, service-learning initiatives, and advocacy efforts. These experiences and achievements serve as examples of best practices in promoting social accountability within medical education in the Southeast Asian region. These achievements have led to the recent award of certificate of merit in social accountability by AMEE International Association for Health Professions Education as part of the ASPIRE to excellence award.

III. STRENGTHENING CAPACITY FOR DISASTER HEALTH MANAGEMENT

Disaster health management can be defined as: "The organisation, coordination, and management of health sector response and recovery efforts in the event of disasters. It involves preparedness, response, relief, and recovery activities aimed at minimising the health impact of disasters on affected populations" (World Health Organization, 2020). This definition underscores the importance of a coordinated and integrated approach to managing health sector response efforts during all phases of a disaster, from preparedness and response to relief and recovery. It emphasises the need for proactive planning, effective coordination, and timely

interventions to minimise the health impact of disasters and support the wellbeing of affected populations. ASEAN Medical Deans have a unique opportunity and responsibility to contribute to strengthening the capacity of medical schools for disaster health management in the Southeast Asian region. By leveraging their expertise, resources, and networks, they can play a critical role in preparing future healthcare professionals, advancing research and innovation, enhancing institutional preparedness, fostering community engagement, and advocating for policy change to build resilience and mitigate the health impact of disasters.

The Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) has a strong track record of experiences and achievements in disaster health management and building capacity for disaster health management. Some of these notable experiences and achievements include: (1) participated in disaster response and relief efforts during various natural disasters, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, and tsunamis; (2) conducted research and innovation projects focused on disaster health management; (3) engaged with local communities to raise awareness about disaster preparedness and response; (4) integrated disaster health management into its education and training programs for students, healthcare professionals, and community members. Overall, the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing at Universitas Gadjah Mada has demonstrated significant experiences and achievements in disaster health management and building capacity for disaster health management. Through its research, education, community engagement, policy advocacy, and international collaboration efforts, the Faculty continues to play a critical role in strengthening disaster resilience, reducing health risks, and improving health outcomes for vulnerable populations in Indonesia and beyond. These achievements have led to the recent appointment of FMPHN UGM as the Secretariat of the ASEAN Institute for Disaster Health Management and the ASEAN Journal of Disaster Health Management.

IV. ENHANCING EVIDENCE-INFORMED HEALTH POLICIES

Evidence-informed policy making can be defined as: "a systematic and transparent approach that draws on the best available data, research and other forms of evidence and knowledge" (World Health Organization, 2024). This definition emphasises the importance of utilising high-quality scientific knowledge and research evidence to inform policy-making processes. It underscores the need for policymakers to rely on evidence-based practices and data-driven approaches to develop and implement policies that effectively address health

challenges and contribute to achieving desired health outcomes. ASEAN Medical Deans have a unique opportunity and responsibility to contribute to strengthening the capacity of medical schools for enhancing evidence-informed policy in the Southeast Asian region. By leveraging their expertise, resources, and networks, they can play a vital role in promoting evidence-based approaches to policy-making and driving positive changes in health systems and outcomes across the region.

The Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing at Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) has demonstrated several experiences and achievements in enhancing evidence-informed policy and building capacity for evidence-informed policy. Some notable examples include: (1) strong track record of conducting high-quality research, which contributes valuable evidence to inform policy-making processes; (2) actively engage in policy advocacy efforts to promote evidence-informed policy-making; (3) collaborates closely with government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and other stakeholders to strengthen evidence-informed policy-making processes; (4) provides training and capacity-building programs to enhance the skills and competencies of students, researchers, and policymakers in evidence-informed policy-making; (5) actively engages in knowledge translation and dissemination activities to ensure that research findings reach policymakers, practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders. Overall, the Faculty of Medicine, Public Health, and Nursing at UGM has made significant contributions to enhancing evidence-informed policy and building capacity for evidence-informed policy-making. Through its research excellence, policy advocacy, collaboration with stakeholders, curricular integration, capacity-building efforts, and knowledge translation activities, the faculty continues to play a vital role in promoting evidence-based approaches to improving health policies and outcomes in Indonesia and beyond. These achievements led to the recent appointment of the Dean of FMPHN UGM as member of the Global Steering Group of WHO Evidence to Policy Network (EvipNet) and initiation of the ADVISE (Advancing Evidence-Informed Policy In South East Asia region) initiative supported by WHO Evidence to policy and impact unit in collaboration with the TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases.

V. EPILOGUE

Our commitment to training the next generation of healthcare professionals, conducting groundbreaking research, and fostering community partnerships resonates with the core values of AMDS. As we look

forward to contributing to the advancement of AMDS, we are poised to champion social accountability, ensuring that academic medical institutions across the region prioritise the needs of the communities they serve. We are steadfast in our resolve to strengthen the capacity of academic medical institutions for disaster health management, equipping future healthcare leaders with the tools and knowledge needed to respond effectively to crises. Moreover, we are committed to promoting evidence-informed policy, harnessing the power of research and innovation to shape policies that improve health outcomes and enhance the wellbeing of individuals and communities throughout the ASEAN region. Together, united in purpose and vision, AMDS will continue to lead, inspire, and drive positive change for the betterment of healthcare and humanity in the region and beyond.

Notes on Contributors

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Declaration of Interest

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