

## MERSING ISLANDS SUBSID EXPEDITION: EXPLORING RURAL SANITATION SYSTEM AND HEALTHCARE SERVICES

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### ABSTRACT

*INTRODUCTION: Mersing Islands, known for their remote and rural settings, present a unique opportunity to explore the challenges and solutions related to water sanitation and excreta removal system as well as the healthcare delivery system in less developed regions. OBJECTIVE: This Subsid Expedition to Mersing Islands in September 2023 aims to provide participants with an in-depth understanding of rural public health. METHODOLOGY: Hands-on learning experience including visits to local water treatment facilities, community-based sanitation projects and traditional excreta removal practices were conducted in addition to community projects focused on healthcare services to the rural community which included health promotion, home visits and conducting health consultation to assess and address the health needs of the local population. Quantitative data from the health record was collected as well. RESULTS: There are 3 types of water supply systems identified on the Mersing Islands and a septic tank system has been built by the BAKAS team as a wastewater management system in one of the islands. The healthcare subsid in September 2023 resulted in the early detection and management of chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, with 46 individuals benefiting from routine screenings and consultation. Additionally, 8 prenatal check-ups were conducted, 6 malnourished children were managed and 4 children received essential immunizations and growth monitoring. Health education was also given to the public and school students. CONCLUSION: The challenges in delivering healthcare services on the Mersing Islands community such the logistical, infrastructural and socio-economic barriers give impacts to the healthcare delivery in such remote location. Improvement of healthcare access and quality for the island communities will definitely improves public health outcomes and community well-being in the underserved areas.*

Keywords: Rural sanitation, Rural healthcare, Island healthcare, Rural public health

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