

INDONESIAN MOSLEM'S BEHAVIOR TOWARD EID AL-FITR DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Abstract. In May 2020, the Indonesian Muslims celebrated Eid Al-Fitr although the COVID-19 pandemic continuously spread. People could be at risk of COVID-19 infection since they commonly gathered during the Eid Al-Fitr. This study aimed to describe Indonesian Moslem's behavior toward Eid Al-Fitr during COVID-19 pandemic. This was a cross-sectional study using quantitative approach conducted in Central Java Province, Indonesia. Data were collected through online survey using google form one day before Eid Al-Fitr, involving 246 respondents. Data were analyzed by univariate and bivariate. The results showed age ($p=0.012$) and occupation ($p=0.016$) were correlated with did *mudik*; additionally, occupation ($p=0.039$) was correlated with planning *mudik*; educational level ($p=0.003$) was correlated with planning Eid prayer; sex ($p=0.039$), age ($p<0.001$), educational level ($p=0.004$), and occupation ($p=0.001$) were correlated with planning *silaturahmi*. There was no correlation of respondents' characteristics with prevention practice. However, several Indonesian Muslims traditions were associated with mask-wearing ($p<0.001$), the intention of Eid prayer ($p<0.001$), and intention of *silaturahmi* ($p<0.001$). *Mudik* as the Indonesian community's tradition ($p=0.027$), planning Eid prayer ($p=0.004$), and planning *silaturahmi* ($p=0.002$) were correlated with avoiding touching face. And the only tradition of planning *silaturahmi* ($p=0.044$) was correlated with handwashing. Even though the Indonesian President banned *mudik* due to the prediction of massive human migration, but 5.7% of respondents did *mudik* and 2.8% would do *mudik*. Clear and law-bound regulations are necessary to be followed by the community to prevent COVID-19 transmission especially during Eid Al-Fitr.

Keywords: prevention practice, behavior, Indonesian Muslim, Eid Al-Fitr, COVID-19

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INTRODUCTION

The first identified coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) case in Indonesia was on 2 March 2020 (WHO Indonesia, 2020b). The confirmed cases of COVID-19 were found in all 34 Provinces. On 28 May 2020, the total cases in Indonesia were 24,538 and more than 400 new confirmed cases were reported daily (WHO Indonesia, 2020b). Sadly, on 13 October 2020, the total cases of COVID-19 in Indonesia increased to 340,622 (COVID-19 Task Force, 2020a). Central Java province reported the first confirmed COVID-19 case on 13 March 2020. On 13 October 2020, the number of cases in the province reached 23,676, equal to the total cases in all Indonesia regions in May 2020. This number increased day by day with average daily new confirmed cases of 105 (Central Java Health Office, 2020).

COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by a coronavirus that can infect people through droplets from the nose or mouth spurting out from cough or sneeze (WHO, 2021). The Indonesian government has promoted health protocols to prevent COVID-19 transmission, such as wearing a mask, washing hands with soap or hand sanitizer, staying at home, and practicing physical distancing (MOH, n.d.). A previous study has proved physical distancing in at least one meter or more could be an effective way to prevent the transmission (Chu *et al*, 2020).

COVID-19 prevention in Indonesia is difficult to be implemented due to low compliance, especially with practicing physical distancing (COVID-19 Task Force, 2020b). Concerning the constraints, the cultural factor is one of the factors affecting its implementation, especially among Central Java citizens. Javanese culture has been ingrained in Central Java

and has inevitably become a habit (Wewenkang and Moordiningsih, 2016).

In May 2020, the Muslim community, including those in Central Java (96.6%), celebrated Eid Al-Fitr. Before and after the day was coming, people would do some traditions, such as homecoming or *mudik*, preparing Eid Al-Fitr needs, praying Eid in a mosque or open space such as field, visiting graves, and *silaturahmi* or visiting each other or *halal bi halal* (asking forgiveness to each other by shaking hands or kissing other's hand). All those traditions gather many people in the same place at the same time (Irianto, 2012; Hakam, 2015; Central Java Bureau of Statistic, 2022).

These traditions have challenged people for COVID-19 transmission. Furthermore, Central Java has always become the highest *mudik* destination in Indonesia during Eid Al-Fitr (Yulianto, 2011). To avoid such worse consequences, the government has imposed a ban on *mudik* one month before Eid al-Fitr to prevent virus transmission to other cities (Prasetia, 2020). The government also appealed to all Muslims to pray Eid at home (not at the mosque or field) concerning the health protocol (Hakim, 2020). However, considering the strong and ingrained Javanese culture, Central Javanese citizens are most likely would still celebrate Eid al-Fitr like usual. Especially when conducting those traditions bring happiness and pleasure feeling to themselves and their significant others, such as *mudik* and *silaturahmi* (Soebyakto, 2011).

Other traditions of Central Javanese Muslims during Eid Al-Fitr are preparing things, such as food and beverages, new clothes, and souvenirs. They consider sharing food with neighbors and relatives and serving it to guests is essential in the celebration. Wearing new clothes on the day is considered holy and free from all sins (Yanti, 2019). During the preparation, people would go to shopping centers, such as markets and malls although the pandemic occurred. Before the Eid Al-Fitr, some malls were still open and overcrowded (Amindoni, 2020). All these traditions and activities-related to it can increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission

when people ignore the health protocols. Cross-sectoral collaboration is required to stop COVID-19 transmission, and thus the community also has to prevent it as possible as they can (Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2020). Looking at the background of the problem, this study aimed to describe COVID-19 prevention practices among Muslims in Indonesia during Eid Al-Fitr.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This was a cross-sectional study using a quantitative approach and accidental sampling to select respondents. Inclusion criteria were: being Indonesian citizen, being Muslim and living in Central Java Province. Data were collected through an online survey via Google Form. The link of the questionnaire was shared on the researchers' social media such as WhatsApp Groups, Instagram accounts, Facebook accounts, and Twitter accounts. We also asked our potential respondents to share the questionnaire link to their friends and relatives as much as they can. To minimize the bias and to optimize respondents' recall, the online questionnaires were distributed only on 23 May 2020, one day before Eid Al-Fitr which was scheduled on 24-25 May 2020. Written consent was included in the beginning of the questionnaire and respondents had agreed to involved in this study. This study could collect 246 respondents in two days. Variables in this study were respondents' characteristics (age, sex, educational level), Muslim Eid Al-Fitr tradition (*mudik* tradition, Eid shopping needs, *silaturahmi* tradition, and Eid praying), and COVID-19 prevention practices (always wearing a mask while doing activity outdoor, touching face even wearing a mask, hand washing, and physical distancing). Data were analyzed univariate and bivariate.

This study has received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee, Faculty of Public Health, Diponegoro University No: 054/EA/KEPK-FKM/2020.

RESULTS

As shown in Table 1, most of the respondents were female (73.2%) and aged ≥ 24 years old (75.2%). Respondents had various education levels. As much as 64.2% had higher education level, namely, senior high school, diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate.

In Table 2, this study shows 5.7% of the respondents went to their home town for Eid Al-Fitr (*mudik*) by the time the data collection was conducted one day before Eid Al-Fitr. However, nearly all of the respondents did not have a plan to *mudik* (83.7%). As much as 13.4% of the respondents still considering whether they are going to *mudik* or not. More than half of the respondents (61.4%) did not consider

Table 1
Respondents' characteristics (N = 246)

Variable	Frequency <i>n</i> (%)
Sex	
Male	66 (26.8)
Female	180 (73.2)
Age	
<24 years old	61 (24.8)
≥ 24 years old	185 (75.2)
Education level	
Lower level education	88 (35.8)
Higher level education	158 (64.2)

Note: Low level education refers to elementary and junior high school while high level education refers to senior high school, diploma, bachelor, master and doctoral degrees.

Table 2
Moslem tradition in Eid day during pandemic COVID-19

Variable	Frequency <i>n</i> (%)
Did mudik	
Yes	14 (5.7)
No	232 (94.3)
Planning for mudik	
Yes	7 (2.8)
Perhaps	33 (13.4)
No	206 (83.7)
Planning for Eid praying in mosque	
Yes	32 (13.0)
Perhaps	63 (25.6)
No	151 (61.4)
Planning for silaturahmi	
Yes	14 (5.7)
Perhaps	89 (36.2)
No	143 (58.1)
Visiting market	
Yes	105 (42.7)
No	141 (57.3)
Eid shopping needs	
Yes	68 (27.6)
No	178 (72.4)

COVID-19: Corona virus disease 2019

praying Eid in a mosque, but 25.6% of them still intended to pray outside their home. Only 13% of them were sure about praying Eid in a mosque. This study also reveals more than half of the respondents did not plan for *silaturahmi* (58.1%), but 5.7% of them would do *silaturahmi*, and 36.2% still considered it. Within the last 7 days, 42.7% of the respondents visited markets for purposes, while 27.6% of them visited markets to buy things for the Eid Al-Fitr celebration within the last 7 days.

Based on Table 3, on the daily basis, 4.5% of the respondents did not wear a mask when doing an activity outdoors. Even, 43.1% of them could not stop touching face even when they were wearing a mask. More than half of the respondents claimed that they practiced handwashing (56.9%). Finally, only 46.7% of them practiced physical distancing.

This study has also pointed out correlations between respondents' characteristics and Eid Al-Fitr traditions, such as *mudik*, intention to *mudik*, intention to pray Eid, intention to *silaturahmi*, market visit, and Eid-shopping-needs. Table 4 shows age ($p=0.012$) and occupation ($p=0.016$) were correlated with *mudik*, and occupation ($p=0.039$) correlated with intention to *mudik*. Education level ($p=0.003$) was associated with the intention to pray Eid. All respondents' characteristics, such as sex ($p=0.039$), age ($p<0.001$), educational level ($p=0.004$), and occupation ($p=0.001$) were associated with intention to *silaturahmi*. Education level ($p=0.038$) was correlated with Eid-shopping-needs.

Regarding COVID-19 prevention practice, Table 5 shows this study does not find any correlation of respondents' characteristics with prevention practices. However, some Indonesian Moslem tradition variables were correlated with COVID-19 prevention practices. Table 6 shows the intention to pray Eid ($p<0.001$) and intention to *silaturahmi* ($p<0.001$) were associated with mask-wearing. Furthermore, *mudik* ($p=0.027$), intention to pray Eid in a mosque ($p=0.004$), and intention to

silaturahmi ($p=0.002$) were associated with avoiding touching face even while wearing a mask. Intention to *silaturahmi* was the only factor correlated with handwashing ($p=0.044$). This study does not find any correlation between market visit and Eid-shopping-needs with any prevention practice. Besides, the tradition variable did not have any correlation with practicing physical distancing.

Table 3
Respondents' practice in preventing COVID-19 transmission

Variable	Frequency <i>n</i> (%)
Always wearing a mask in doing outdoor activities	
Yes	235 (95.5)
No	11 (4.5)
Touching face even wearing a mask	
Yes	106 (43.1)
No	140 (56.9)
Hand washing	
Sometimes	3 (1.2)
Often	103 (41.9)
Always	140 (56.9)
Physical distancing	
Never	1 (0.4)
Sometimes	7 (2.8)
Often	123 (50.0)
Always	115 (46.7)

COVID-19: Corona virus disease 2019

Table 4
 Respondents' characteristic and Indonesian Moslem tradition

Variable	Did mudik	Planning mudik	Planning Eid prayer in the mosque	Planning silaturahmi	Visit market	Eid shopping needs
Sex	Not related ($p=0.880$)	Not related ($p=0.388$)	Not related ($p=0.131$)	Related ($p=0.039$)	Not related ($p=0.073$)	Not related ($p=0.172$)
Age	Related ($p=0.012$)	Not related ($p=0.112$)	Not related ($p=0.060$)	Related ($p<0.001$)	Not related ($p=0.124$)	Not related ($p=0.180$)
Educational level	Not related ($p=0.944$)	Not related ($p=0.846$)	Related ($p=0.003$)	Related ($p=0.004$)	Not related ($p=0.065$)	Related ($p=0.038$)
Occupation	Related ($p=0.016$)	Related ($p=0.039$)	Not related ($p=0.084$)	Related ($p=0.001$)	Not related ($p=0.933$)	Not related ($p=0.455$)
Income	Not related ($p=0.713$)	Not related ($p=0.100$)	Not related ($p=0.056$)	Related ($p=0.003$)	Not related ($p=0.445$)	Not related ($p=0.078$)

Table 5
 Respondents' characteristic and COVID-19 prevention practice

Variable	Wearing mask	Touching face	Hand washing	Physical distancing
Sex	Not related ($p=0.465$)	Not related ($p=0.457$)	Not related ($p=0.162$)	Not related ($p=0.117$)
Age	Not related ($p=0.366$)	Not related ($p=0.829$)	Not related ($p=0.416$)	Not related ($p=0.060$)
Educational level	Not related ($p=0.217$)	Not related ($p=0.216$)	Not related ($p=0.949$)	Not related ($p=0.233$)
Occupation	Not related ($p=0.211$)	Not related ($p=0.484$)	Not related ($p=0.733$)	Not related ($p=0.487$)
Income	Not related ($p=0.254$)	Not related ($p=0.353$)	Not related ($p=0.293$)	Not related ($p=0.496$)

COVID-19: Corona virus disease 2019

Table 6
 Indonesian Moslem tradition and COVID-19 prevention practice

Variable	Wearing mask	Touching face	Hand washing	Physical distancing
Did mudik	Not related ($p=0.618$)	Related ($p=0.027$)	Not related ($p=0.467$)	Not related ($p=0.784$)
Planning mudik	Not related ($p=0.768$)	Not related ($p=0.227$)	Not related ($p=0.501$)	Not related ($p=0.934$)
Planning Eid prayer in the mosque	Related ($p<0.001$)	Related ($p=0.004$)	Not related ($p=0.180$)	Not related ($p=0.163$)
Planning silaturahmi	Related ($p<0.001$)	Related ($p=0.002$)	Related ($p=0.044$)	Not related ($p=0.127$)
Visit market	Not related ($p=0.416$)	Not related ($p=0.949$)	Not related ($p=0.412$)	Not related ($p=0.083$)
Eid shopping needs	Not related ($p=0.473$)	Not related ($p=0.437$)	Not related ($p=0.969$)	Not related ($p=0.131$)

COVID-19: Corona virus disease 2019

DISCUSSION

Indonesian Muslims traditions during Eid Al-Fitr**1. *Mudik***

Mudik or homecoming comes from the word “udik” or village once then defined as returning to home. In Javanese, *mudik* is translated into “mulih dilik” or going home for a while. It is a tradition that most Indonesian people will do just before Eid Al-Fitr (Soebyakto, 2011; Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016; Utami, 2020). Those who live far from their hometowns usually *mudik* within 7 days before and 7 days after the Eid Al-Fitr. *Mudik* is an annual ritual that every Muslim will do despite their economic or social status (Soebyakto, 2011). People mostly take various types of public or private air, sea, and land transportation (Ministry of Transportation, 2020).

Amid the current COVID-19 pandemic, *mudik* will increase the risk of transmission to other people. Even worse, cities with zero cases might have new emerging cases since COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person (Tirachini and Cats, 2020). For example, if there is one asymptomatic person doing *mudik* taking an airplane, he will be more likely to transmit the virus to other people inside, including flight attendants. Then, the infected people will transmit the virus to people inside the airport and outside the airport, such as sellers, taxis drivers, other passengers, and even their own family in the destination town (Anonymous, 2020).

Considering the high risk of COVID-19 transmission due to massive human migration, the Indonesian government has imposed a ban on *mudik* on 24 April 2020 through the Regulation of the Minister of Transportation No. 25 of 2020 concerning transportation control during Eid Al-Fitr in 1441 H (Ministry of Transportation, 2020). The result shows 94.3% respondents did not *mudik* and 83.7% did not plan to *mudik*.

It implies that the community obeyed the regulation even though some of them (5.7%) already *mudik*. A previous study notes that Javanese people tend to consider adherence to culture stronger than compliance with government regulations (Sumbulah, 2012).

Other studies also found the correlation of age and occupation with *mudik* or intention to *mudik*. Teenagers and adults were more likely to do *mudik* since they did not meet their parents and family for a long time. Working people tend to do *mudik* as a social-economic phenomenon, which includes showing establishment and prosperity to the family (Soebyakto, 2011; Irianto, 2012).

2. Eid Prayer

After fasting for the whole month in *Ramadhan*, Muslims will celebrate Eid Al-Fitr. On the day, they will congregate in a mosque or open space to pray Eid. In Islam, pray Eid al-Fitr is *sunnah muakad*, which means it is not mandatory but is highly recommended to be implemented. In addition, one of Eid Pray's virtues is that it is carried out in the congregation both in the mosque or in other open spaces.

During the pandemic, the government has prohibited congregation in public places, including places for prostration to avoid COVID-19 transmission. Several previous incidents showed that people who congregated to pray in a mosque got infected by other worshipers, thereby making the mosque lockdown (Hamonangan, 2020; Mawardi, 2020). Considering this fact, the Indonesian Ministry of Religion issued Circular Letter No. 1 of 2020 concerning the implementation of COVID-19 handling protocols in houses of worship. In addition, the Indonesian Ulema Council has issued Fatwa No. 28 of 2020 concerning guidance on *Kaifiat Takbir* and Eid prayer during the COVID- 19 pandemic. The fatwa contains the recommendation to conduct Eid prayers with family at homes, especially in areas where the COVID-19 transmission has not been controlled (Indonesian Religious Leader, 2020; Ministry of Religion, 2020).

The result also shows 13% of the respondents planned to pray Eid in a mosque, opposing the regulations from the Ministry of Religion and fatwa MUI. This variable was correlated with the education level ($p=0.003$). On the contrary, some researchers have found that education level was not correlated with behavior (Arifin and Susanto, 2013; Sari and Mulasari, 2017). While some others have argued by saying that educational level was correlated to behavior. The higher the educational level is, the more individual performs a behavior (Roni *et al*, 2013; Hermawan, 2015).

3. *Silaturahmi*

Eid Al-Fitr means being holy. Due to its virtue, Muslims will visit families, relatives, friends, and neighbors to ask for forgiveness to achieve inner peace and holiness. According to Hakam, this tradition is not limited by age, gender, or education (Hakam, 2015). When doing *silaturahmi*, people usually shake hands with each other and hug each other. Even in Javanese culture, people will ask for forgiveness and show respect through *salim* and *sungkem* (Utami, 2020). *Salim* is bowing face to kiss others' hands. While *sungkem* means kneeling and pressing a person's face to another knee when he/she is sitting down while bowing the head and kissing another's hand. *Sungkem* and *salim* in Javanese culture also mean to show respect to other people, not only for asking for forgiveness (Utami, 2020). This tradition has a valuable and strong virtue as it strengthens the bonding and social relationship between people.

The transmission of COVID-19 is proved to be from person to person through droplets when they talk, cough, or sneeze. Doing *silaturahmi* will increase the risk of COVID-19 transmission as people congregate in one place and contact with others through physical touch and visiting other people, shaking hands, *salim*, *sungkem*, eating and drinking, and other close interactions. The result of this study shows that 58.1% of the

respondents did not plan for *silaturahmi*. All respondents' characteristics variables, such as sex ($p=0.039$), age ($p<0.001$), educational level ($p=0.004$), and occupation ($p=0.001$), were associated with intention to *silaturahmi*.

4. Market visit

During Eid Al-Fitr, one relatively new tradition among Indonesian Muslims is preparing things for Eid Al-Fitr. They prepare food and beverages, new clothes, and souvenirs. This tradition is called *munjung* which means visiting others and sharing food and beverages with relatives and guests (Soebyakto, 2011; Yanti, 2019).

People think that wearing new clothes with no stain in Eid Al-Fitr is one of the holy practices to free from all sins (Soebyakto, 2011; Yanti, 2019). This tradition affects people' visit to markets and malls during the pandemic of COVID-19. It was observed that some malls were overcrowded before Eid Al-Fitr (Amindoni, 2020). Being in crowded places potentially increases COVID-19 transmission.

The result showed 42.7% of respondents went to markets within the last 7 days, and 27.6% of them went there for Eid shopping needs. This study finds no variables correlated with market visit. Only the education level was correlated with shopping for Eid preparation ($p=0.038$). Some researches show that education level was correlated with expenditure, especially during Eid Al-Fitr (Novianti, 2018; Mardiah, 2019). They suggest that education level can strongly trigger shopping activities before Eid day.

COVID-19 prevention practice

One of the COVID-19 prevention measures is by wearing a mask. During the early pandemic, only sick people were compulsory to wear masks as the availability of medical masks went lacking due to the high demand. However, World Health Organization (WHO) has recommended that all

people have to always wear masks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also instructed people to wear a cloth face mask for doing activities outside (CDC, 2020; WHO Indonesia, 2020a).

This study shows 95.5% of the respondents wore a mask when doing the activity outdoors. All respondents' characteristics variables were not correlated with mask-wearing. While the intention to pray Eid in a mosque ($p<0.001$) and intention to *silaturahmi* ($p<0.001$) were correlated with mask-wearing. A previous study in Indonesia conducted by Pratiwi has also shown that not all respondents always wore a mask when doing the activity outside (Pratiwi, 2020). While we are still focusing on who wear masks and who does not, in China, people always wear a mask outside before the vaccine was distributed. Studies in China found that nearly all Chinese (98%) were always wearing a mask, but only 32.47% of students used properly fitted face masks, because they could not buy kid's masks (Chen *et al*, 2020; Zhong *et al*, 2020). Another study in China reveals the super-factor associated with the transmission of COVID-19 among healthcare staff was wearing a medical protective mask correctly (Wang *et al*, 2020). Indonesia needs to catch up on this lag. By implementing preventive measures properly, the prevention of COVID-19 can be more effective.

Based on the same study in China, another super-factor associated with the transmission of COVID-19 was touching the cheek, nose, and mouth. It had the strongest impact on reducing COVID-19 transmission (Wang *et al*, 2020). The Indonesian government had recommended people to avoid touching face when they are outside. However, this study reveals 43.1% of the respondents touched face even while they were wearing a mask. In this study, all respondents' characteristics were not correlated with avoiding touching face. However, the intention to pray Eid in a mosque ($p=0.004$) and intention to *silaturahmi* ($p=0.002$) were correlated with avoiding touching face. Unlike this study's finding, a previous study in the United States shows 55% of the respondents could avoid

touching the face (Block *et al*, 2020).

Another prevention measure is handwashing. The result of this study shows 56.9% of the respondents always washed their hands with soap and water, and 41.9% of them often practiced handwashing within the last 7 days. Supporting this finding, a previous study in the United States finds 72% of the respondents frequently washed their hands (Block *et al*, 2020). Furthermore, a study in Iran points out 87% of the respondents frequently washed their hands with water and soap, and this practice was correlated with COVID-19 transmission (Bashirian *et al*, 2020). This variable did not correlate with any respondents' characteristics. However, intention to *silaturahmi* was significantly correlated with handwashing ($p=0.044$). Handwashing is a basic practice of maintaining health, not only to prevent COVID-19 transmission but also to prevent other infectious diseases. Even though handwashing has been suggested for decades, Indonesian people seem not aware of the importance of handwashing. The proportion of the Indonesian population who have handwashing facilities was 68.16% in 2017 and 76.07% in 2019 (Central Java Bureau of Statistic, 2022).

Not only handwashing practice, but physical distancing has also become a way to prevent COVID-19 transmission and highly recommended by Indonesian government (Ihsanuddin, 2020). This study finds 46.7% of the respondents always practiced physical distancing, and 50% of them often practiced it. Physical distancing did not correlate with any respondents' characteristics and Muslim traditions in Indonesia. When predicting physical distancing with the Indonesian Muslim tradition, it appears that there was no association as well.

Physical distancing is the self-protection practices from COVID-19 transmission. A study in the United States has found that health information and awareness of immediate family members were strongly correlated with physical distancing practice (Li *et al*, 2020). Health education related to physical distancing and other prevention measures is still required for the future of COVID-19 prevention.

In summary, most of respondents had applied the COVID-19 prevention practices and the Indonesian President has imposed a ban on *mudik* during Eid Al-Fitr considering the greater likelihood of COVID-19 transmission. Both sides must support each other to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Therefore, clear and law-bound regulations are required, and the community has to obey the regulations.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

The authors declared no conflict of interest, financial issues, or others.

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