



Frequency and Specificity of Health Issues in Local Political Campaigns

Journal:	<i>International Journal of Health Governance</i>
Manuscript ID	ijhg-03-2023-0034.R1
Manuscript Type:	Original Article
Keywords:	Public health, Health policy, Political strategy < Health policy, Behavioral, social or mental health issues < Non-infectious conditions epidemiology, Communication < Health Service Quality Assurance, Determinants of health < Public health

Frequency and Specificity of Health Issues in Local Political Campaigns

Abstract

Purpose: This study investigates the frequency and specificity of health-related issues discussed during the East Java Indonesia gubernatorial Election Campaign 2018.

Design/methodology/approach: The research utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining topic modeling and qualitative thematic analysis, to analyze 4,023 online news articles from March to June 2018. From the data sources obtained in terms of time frame, this research can be categorized as a retrospective study because it examines origins from events that have already occurred.

Findings: The study found that health issues accounted for only 6% of all gubernatorial election news in each selected online media portal. The identified health-related issues were categorized into eight groups: health financing and facilities, health workers, malnutrition and stunting, leprosy, cigarettes and tobacco, healthy living behavior, pregnancy and breastfeeding, and disability. The study also reveals a need for increased attention to health-related issues in political campaigns and media. By focusing on the health-related issues raised during the campaign, the study provides valuable insights into the gaps and priorities in addressing the health needs of the East Java population. The research framework used in this study offers a valuable approach for analyzing online data sources using qualitative analysis capacity. The study can improve health policies and outcomes in the local election campaign by raising awareness of health issues and promoting informed decision-making among voters.

Research limitation/implications: This research limitation is a local political campaign case in Indonesia. The research indicates that health issues receive limited coverage during election campaigns, suggesting a lack of emphasis on health as a critical issue among East Java's electorate.

Originality/value: The study can improve health policies and outcomes in the local election campaign by raising awareness of health issues and promoting informed decision-making among voters.

Keywords: Public health; Health policy; Political strategy; Behavioral social or mental health issues; Communication; Determinant of health

Paper type: Research article

Introduction

A paradoxical situation arises when health becomes a part of public policy discussions, but there is still a debate about whether health is an issue that is not related to politics, power, and ideology (Navarro & Shi, 2001). The debate is unnecessary if we see that health services are part of a commodity (resource) distribution system that cannot be separated from the discourse of power and budget politics. The healthcare system is also subject to political intervention, closely related to policy initiatives (Bambra et al., 2005). Therefore, the political commitment of regional head candidates who will hold power towards improving the quality of public health is important to be studied carefully. The commitment of regional head candidates to health development can be represented in two aspects: budget allocation and accuracy of budget utilization (Ridlo, 2018). The Gubernatorial campaign period in Indonesia's province is an important

1
2
3 47 phenomenon to assess the health issues carried by each candidate for governor as an
4 48 important discussion for improving health policy.

5
6 49 The health issue in political campaigns is very contextual (Fowler et al., 2019).
7
8 50 Unfortunately, it is common for candidates to use health issues as a political commodity
9
10 51 (Rathomi et al., 2018). Health issues are also often presented as populist by candidates.
11
12 52 The campaign promise that is usually made is improving health services by increasing
13
14 53 the human resources of health workers and building health facilities. But it is rare for
15
16 54 public health programs in political campaigns to be accompanied by a clear concept of
17
18 55 governance (Benning et al., 2020; Oliver, 2006). In addition, political campaigns are often
19
20 56 portrayed as extremely dangerous, unethical, and brutal. The more populist a candidate
21
22 57 is, the more likely he or she will fabricate many lies during the campaign (Curini, 2018)

23
24 58 Political campaigning is a transaction process that can be analogous to a transaction
25
26 59 that occurs between a seller and a buyer. In political campaigns, candidates offer political
27
28 60 leadership, vision, programs, and policies to the voting public, which is exchanged for the
29
30 61 voting public's support (Ali & Eriyanto, 2021; Lipsitz et al., 2005). Even political
31
32 62 campaigns, which reformers considered a clean, intelligent, and enlightening campaign
33
34 63 model, were tedious and challenging for the electorate. This relates to the nature of the
35
36 64 voting public who do not have the resources to process complex information, especially
37
38 65 the voting public who have little interest in political issues (Lilleker, 2014).

39
40 66 In the context of political campaigns and health-related issues in Indonesia, it is
41
42 67 crucial to consider the impact of these campaigns on advancing public health. While the
43
44 68 effectiveness of political campaigns can be seen through online media, it remains to be
45
46 69 seen whether campaigns around health issues translate into meaningful policy changes
47
48 70 that improve health outcomes (Gollust et al., 2019; Jo & You, 2019). On the other hand,
49
50 71 political candidates may have more valid arguments and perspectives on health issues
51
52 72 than the general public. Therefore, carefully considering the facts and evidence behind
53
54 73 each claim is essential (Jensen, 2017). Politicians should be encouraged to make health
55
56 74 issues, such as the development of health financing systems towards universal health
57
58 75 coverage (Jung, 2016). The success of these policies is influenced by domestic political
59
60 76 interests that emerge in local political campaigns (Pisani et al., 2017). In the era of
77
78 77 decentralization, the space for health policy experimentation at the district level has
79
80 78 become increasingly open. Politicians seeking electoral are crucial in disseminating and
79
80 79 promoting successful health policy models. These models are then replicated by other
80
80 80 districts and eventually adopted at the national level. Another study also confirmed that

1
2
3
4 81 electoral campaign is an important factor in determining the level of free healthcare
5 82 coverage in a district (Fossati, 2017). Therefore, politicians' involvement in health issues
6 83 significantly impacts public health.

7
8 84 The setting for this study is East Java Province. East Java is pivotal in Indonesia's
9 85 national health system, influenced by population size, diversity, health infrastructure,
10 86 common health issues, and policy impact. This argument is supported by some studies.
11 87 A study identified significant challenges in healthcare quality control in East Java,
12 88 highlighting issues like delayed hospital claim payments, healthcare regulation, and low
13 89 public awareness of a healthy lifestyle, all of which affect the National Health Insurance
14 90 (JKN) system (Wibowo et al., 2023). And also impacted the hospital payment system in
15 91 East Java and has the potential to increase fraud (Khoiri et al., 2020). Moreover, a study
16 92 on the implementation of the National Health Insurance at the Primary Health Center
17 93 (PHC) found that this policy implementation was hampered by a lack of doctors, medical
18 94 equipment (Eskawati et al., 2018); poor access to health facilities (Putri et al., 2021); and
19 95 low (4.6%) utility of primary care other provinces on the island of Java (Wulandari et al.,
20 96 2023) These studies demonstrate the complexities of implementing a health system in
21 97 East Java. Thus, this research aims to examine the frequency and specificity of health-
22 98 related topics in local political campaigns during the gubernatorial elections, utilizing
23 99 online news media as a source of information. The objective is to identify the key health
24 100 issues highlighted in local political campaigns.

25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38 101

39 102 **Methods**

40
41 103 This research used a mixed-methods approach that involved topic modeling to
42 104 organize the diverse article content from online news media into topics and then
43 105 performed qualitative thematic analysis on a subset of data to inductively theme. This
44 106 research framework uses a mixed methods approach that combines online data source
45 107 tracking techniques with qualitative analysis capacity. This research explores the
46 108 central themes regarding health policies, programs, and issues in the local political
47 109 campaigns of the Gubernatorial Election in East Java from February 15 to June 23,
48 110 2018, in online news media. From the data sources obtained in terms of time frame,
49 111 this research can be categorized as a retrospective study because it examines origins
50 112 from events that have already occurred (Guallar, 2017)

51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58 113 The researcher collected news from online portals by automating some aspects of
59 114 data collection and consolidation so that researchers had a manageable volume of data
60

115 to synthesize and interpret with a qualitative approach. The research framework
 116 consists of the following four stages: (1) collecting online news data, (2) selecting
 117 articles based on dimensions of relevance, (3) extracting a subset of data from the most
 118 relevant space within the health theme, and (4) conducting a qualitative analysis of that
 119 subset of data.

120 Selection of News Articles, Screening Process, and Quotes Coding

121 Archival data of website documentation is collected retrospectively with the help of
 122 *an internet archive way back machine* (<http://web.archive.org/>). The online news portal
 123 selection category was chosen with reference to news portals that are popular nationally
 124 and locally. Article collection is obtained from online news portals with the following
 125 categories.

126 **Table 1. Category of Media and News Portals in the Research Sample**

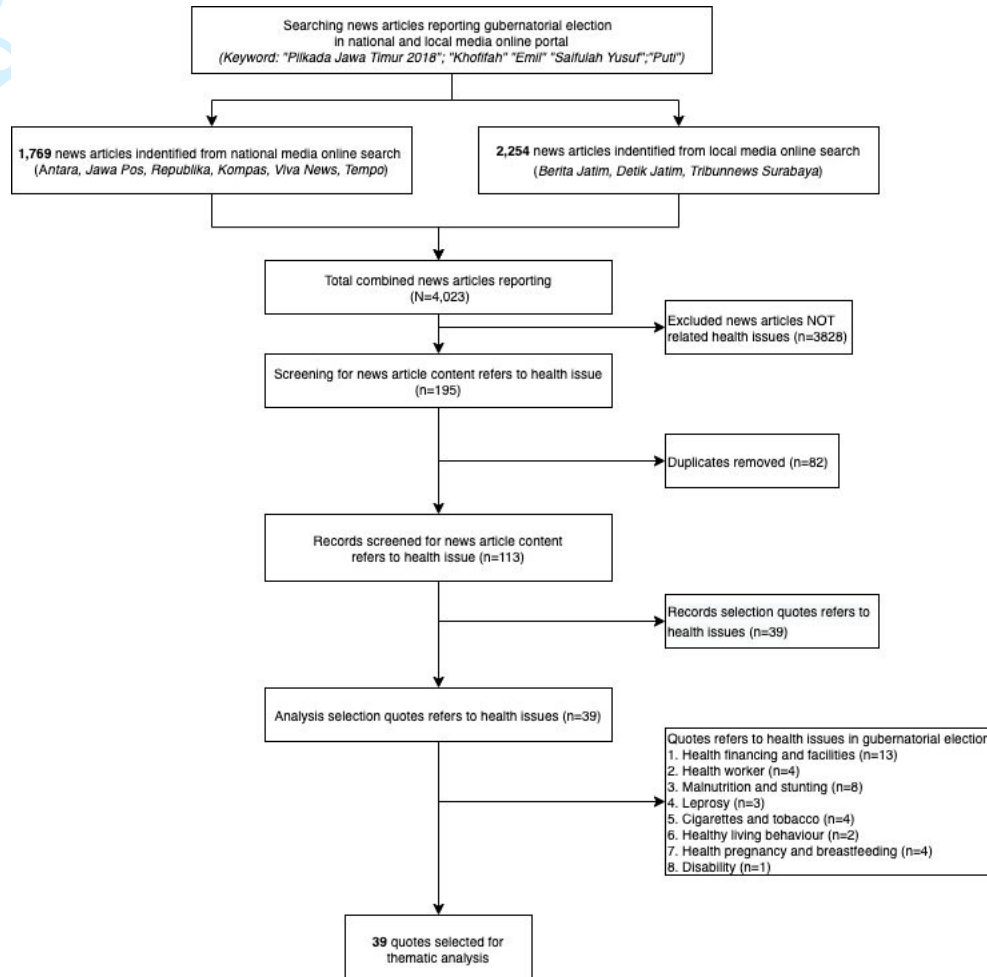
No.	Online Media Category	News Portal
1.	National online media	1. JawaPos.com 2. Tempo.co 3. Antaranews.com, 4. Nasional.republika.co.id, 5. Kompas.com, 6. Viva.co.id
2.	Local online media (east java)	1. Beritajatim.com, 2. News.detik.com/jatim, 3. Surabaya.tribunnews.com

127
 128 The data (excerpts) from the extracted online portals then went through a coding
 129 and clustering process with Atlas.ti software to organize the process of coding and
 130 clustering the qualitative data taken from the websites of the selected media portals.
 131 Qualitative data sets according to the category are analyzed and discussed using
 132 thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is usually applied to a collection of texts (interview
 133 transcripts, voices, and images) by first identifying, organizing, and presenting insights
 134 into patterns of symbolic meaning or themes in transcripts (Clarke & Braun, 2014). All
 135 news articles searched online on selected news portals are then read in detail by
 136 researchers to identify and capture issues. The collected news articles performed a
 137 duplication selection process and screening of selected criteria (Figure 1) to identify and
 138 capture the text of direct quotations from each candidate in the East Java Governatorial
 139 Election 2018. All collected news articles are analyzed and documented in qualitative

140 data management software. From the beginning to selecting the text of the quotation to
 141 be analyzed can be described in Figure 1 below.

142 **Figure 1.**

143 **News Article Screening Process and Quotes Coding**



144

145

146

147 **Results**

148 **Health Issues in Online Media Coverage**

149 Between March 1 and June 30, 2018, 4023 online news articles were identified as
 150 containing news about the East Java gubernatorial election campaign. Of the 4023 (N)
 151 online news articles, 1769 (44%) were released by media with national coverage, and
 152 2254 (56%) were released by media with local coverage (Table 1). From the data
 153 collected, the quantity of news is compiled and distinguished according to the scope
 154 of the media, online media, and the number of news articles during the campaign
 155 period, which can be described below.

156

157 **Table 2.**
158 **News Articles about Gubernatorial Election Campaigns of East Java 2018**

Media Coverage	Portal Media	Number of News Articles				Total Articles
		March	April	May	June	
National	Antara	125	167	124	80	496
	Jawa Pos	142	152	124	94	512
	Kompas	29	44	23	22	118
	Republika	46	52	42	25	165
	VIVA News	20	29	20	28	97
	Tempo	139	53	153	36	381
Local	Berita Jatim	47	223	225	291	786
	Detik Jatim	162	235	229	306	932
	TribunNews Surabaya	155	235	43	103	536

159 *Source: Analysis results from collection news articles March-June 2018*

160 The article, which contained the news of the East Java gubernatorial election
161 campaign 2018, identified where candidates for regional head candidates delivered
162 campaigns specifically taking the theme of health (Table 2).

163 **Table 3.**
164 **Health Issues in Gubernatorial Election Campaigns of East Java 2018**

Media Coverage	Portal Media	Number of News Articles				Total Articles
		March	April	May	June	
National	Antara	6	16	5	3	30
	Jawa Pos	5	14	7	3	29
	Kompas	0	4	0	0	4
	Republika	0	7	2	1	10
	VIVA News	1	2	0	0	3
	Tempo	1	1	1	0	3
Local	Berita Jatim	1	20	10	6	37
	Detik Jatim	8	29	8	3	48
	TribunNews Surabaya	7	14	6	4	31

165 *Source: Analysis results from collection news articles March-June 2018*

166 In general, of the news related to the East Java gubernatorial election, news articles
167 containing health issues accounted for at most 6% of all news about the East Java
168 gubernatorial election for each selected online media portal (Table 3). There were 195
169 news articles discussing health issues of 4.8% (n=195) of all news (N=4023), then a
170 screening was carried out, and 82 duplications of news articles were found so that
171 only 113 news articles were selected (Table 3). The selected news articles were
172 checked for relevance, and quotations directly related to candidates' statements were
173 sorted out. The various health issues selected (n=133) were grouped according to the
174 category of health issues, and a selection of quotes chosen (quotes) was established
175 39 quotes. The choice of quotes is taken by considering the criteria in the form of direct

176 questions for candidates cited by online media. The selected quotes are then carried
 177 out further analysis using thematic analysis.

178 **Table 5.**

179 **Number of Quotes Selected by Health Issues Category in Gubernatorial**
 180 **Election Campaigns of East Java 2018**

Category Health Issues	Number of News Articles Health Issues	Number of Quotes selected
Health Financing and Facilities	22	13
Health Workers	8	4
Malnutrition and Stunting	38	8
Leprosy	10	3
Cigarettes and Tobacco	17	4
Healthy Living Behaviour	12	2
Health Pregnancy and Breastfeeding	19	4
Disability	7	1
(n)	133	39

181 *Source: Analysis results from collection news articles March-June 2018 (N=4023, n=133)*

182
 183 **Health Issues in Gubernatorial Election**

184 From the health issues presented by the candidates in the 2018 East Java
 185 gubernatorial election, 39 quotes were selected that were related to the categories of
 186 Health financing and facilities, malnutrition and stunting, leprosy, cigarettes and
 187 tobacco, healthy living behaviors, the health of pregnant women and exclusive
 188 breastfeeding, health workers and issues of persons with disabilities. The collected
 189 quotes go through a selection process in the form of relevance to health issues and
 190 eliminate duplication. Some of these issues can be discussed as follows.

191
 192 **Health Financing and Facilities**

193 The candidates still see the issue of health for the poor as an essential issue, equal to
 194 other public issues such as education. This question can be seen in the following
 195 *Berita Jatim* news article.

196 *"Like education, health is vital for citizens, especially the*
 197 *underprivileged" (Berita Jatim, 6 June 2018)*
 198

1
2
3 199 Health financing is a central issue in the era of Universal Healthcare Coverage (UHC).
4
5 200 The role of local governments in the success of the National Health Insurance (NHI)
6
7 201 membership coverage. The issue of guaranteeing to finance for the community is also
8
9 202 an issue chosen by regional head candidates in the election campaign. The quality of
10
11 203 primary health services in the referral system is a concern. The long service quality
12
13 204 and queuing point in the National Health Insurance (JKN) system managed by Social
14
15 205 Security Administrator for Health (BPJS Kesehatan) was answered with operational
16
17 206 solutions to create *call centers* and *customer care*. As explained in the candidate quote
18
19 207 on the *Jawa Pos* news portal below:

20 208 *"...The BPJS must be of high quality. It's useless if we go to a*
21 209 *Puskesmas or health center, but the service can take half a day.*
22 210 *Even then, if it is possible, what if it is rejected. So we want a call*
23 211 *centre where if we have a headache, we can just call," (Jawa Pos,*
24 212 *25 May 2018).*

25 213 However, the health financing and services issue in the era needs more systematically
26 214 thought about by prospective regional heads. Instead, in addition to the long waiting
27 215 time for services in primary health facilities, the issue of health financing needs to be
28 216 discussed through planning the composition of the regional development budget.
29 217 Another candidate proposed the Hopeful Family Program (PKH), which included a
30 218 health financing budget at the family level through a budget improvement scheme. The
31 219 *Antara news portal* quoted the following statement:

32 220 *"...I will compile the composition of the development budget in favor*
33 221 *of the interests of the people." (Antara, 23 May 2018)*

34 222 National health financing guarantees are the most important part of the attention of
35 223 candidates for regional head candidates because the role of regions is related to the
36 224 autonomy of health development, which requires the role of regions to contribute to
37 225 health financing, especially for the poor who are included in the participation borne by
38 226 the government. Candidates for regional head candidates translate the role of local
39 227 governments in health financing by creating populist programs such as the following
40 228 East Java Health Card (KJS).

41 229 *"For health, we are committed to issuing the East Java Health Card*
42 230 *(KJS) because I believe not all people in East Java are*
43 231 *accommodated in the Social Security or Social Security*
44 232 *Administrator for Health (BPJSK) program, so those who have not*
45 233 *received it will be given the Jatim Sehat Card," (Antara, 27 March*
46 234 *2018).*

1
2
3 235
4 236 The candidate is optimistic in a quote in *Berita Jatim* that the East Java Health Card
5 237 (KJS) can provide health insurance for citizens.
6 238

7 239 *"East Java Health Card (KJS) will provide health insurance for*
8 240 *residents" (Berita Jatim, 6 June 2018).*

9 241
10 242 The East Java Health Card (KJS) program was created to support the membership
11 243 quota that Social Security Administrator for Health (BPJS Kesehatan) has not covered.
12 244 According to them, the problem of membership is related to population issues. As
13 245 explained in the following quotes from *Berita Jatim*, *Detik*, and *Tribunnews*.

14 246
15 247 *" East Java Health Card (KJS) is to finance poor families who are*
16 248 *sick and have not been registered as Social Security Administrator*
17 249 *for Health (BPJSK) participants" (Berita Jatim, 23 May 2018).*

18 250
19 251 *"Our obstacles are related to the situation or condition that we have*
20 252 *not been able to cooperate with BPJSK. And some poor patients*
21 253 *who have not been covered can be accommodated in the Jatim*
22 254 *Sehat program" (Detik, 31 May 2018)*

23 255
24 256 *"There are those who are not combed because the Residential*
25 257 *Identity Card (KTP) is not valid, or they are moving cities, the old*
26 258 *KTP is not there, so it is not registered at the neighborhood/ward*
27 259 *(RT/RW), so they cannot get Indonesia Health Card (KIS). So we*
28 260 *will comb again" (Tribunnews, 31 May 2018)*

29 261
30 262 The health financing system used as one of the programs 'sold' by the candidates in
31 263 the campaign is also related to the equitable distribution of quality services. East Java
32 264 Health Card (KJS) will not have good utility without equitable access to quality services.
33 265 So the program is also a concern for the candidates, as quoted in *Berita Jatim*.

34 266
35 267 *"We have the Laras Hati program, which is an evenly distributed*
36 268 *service of healthy and innovative quality" (Berita Jatim, 8 June*
37 269 *2018).*

38 270 In several aspects of health services, the regions also have a role in strengthening
39 271 health facilities, especially in remote areas. The role of local governments in supporting
40 272 access to health services includes strengthening health service referrals and
41 273 establishing referral hospitals in the regions. Some of the election candidate quotes
42 274 published in *Detik* explain as follows.

43 275 *"This is what the president (Joko Widodo) wants so that regions can*
44 276 *strengthen health facilities in remote areas" (Detik, 27 March 2018)*

45 277 In some areas in East Java, which candidates see as areas that need referral hospitals,
46 278 such as Madura Island, the current referral concept relies on support from Dr. Soetomo

279 Regional General Hospital (RSUD) in Surabaya city. This referral is considered not
280 optimal in terms of access and mobility.

281 *"So Madurese who need certain treatments do not need to come to*
282 *Surabaya. Because, in Madura, a filial of Dr Soetomo Hospital will*
283 *be built," (Detik, 27 March 2018)*
284

285 *"In Pamekasan, there is already a pilot. This is what must be*
286 *strengthened later," (Detik, 27 March 2018)*
287

288 Candidates suggested that Madura Island should have a referral hospital with a higher
289 type and class of care than the existing type C hospital. Candidates also idealise health
290 facilities for the community. Before patients are referred to RSUD dr Soetomo,
291 Surabaya, patients should be treated at a referral hospital in Madura, as quoted by
292 *Jawa Pos* below.

293 *"The next government is responsible for improving development in*
294 *Madura. Both in the infrastructure sector, the economy, and health*
295 *services. Madura must have one referral hospital" (Jawa Pos, 4*
296 *April 2018)*
297

298 **Health Workers**

299 In addition to the issues of health services and health facilities, the need for health
300 personnel was also an issue that the candidates considered. This personnel's
301 distribution should align with the distribution and development of health facilities in
302 East Java. Health workers consisting of medical, nursing, and other health workers as
303 public health efforts need to be considered. As quoted by *Jawa Pos*, the candidates
304 will fulfill the availability of health centers with specialists.

305 *"We will also provide specialist services at all community health*
306 *centers. Later, patients cured at the Public Health Center*
307 *(Puskesmas) do not have to be referred to the hospital" (Jawa Pos,*
308 *9 June 2018).*

309 Candidates hoped filling primary health care centers with specialists would reduce
310 hospital referrals. This may change the pattern of patient referrals and the function of
311 basic health services. Medical personnel is fulfilled by optimizing special agreements
312 with campuses and preparing provincial government funding allocations. *Antara*
313 quoted the candidate's statement as follows.

314 *"There are special agreements/MoUs with campuses, of course, the*
315 *allocation of funds is prepared by the East Java Provincial*
316 *Government" (Antara, 30 May 2018).*

317 The candidate also prepared a scheme to send thousands of Doctors to villages to
318 promote equitable access and distribution of health workers.

319 *"We have also prepared a scheme to send thousands of doctors to*
320 *villages so that health services are more evenly distributed" (Antara,*
321 *30 May 2018).*

322 The fulfillment of health workers is carried out for the mentoring program for pregnant
323 women with educational institutions. *Republika* nationally reported quotes from
324 candidates in political campaigns regarding the model of mentoring pregnant women
325 by health workers or students in the health sector.

326 *"So they are accompanied. There are special officers. We*
327 *consolidate all stakeholders, starting from Puskesmas, health*
328 *cadres, and campuses with relevant majors to assist pregnant*
329 *women. We prepare the budget" (Republika, 30 May 2018)*

330 **Malnutrition and Stunting**

331 During the debate between the candidates for the Gubernatorial Election of East Java,
332 the issue discussed and debated was the issue of malnutrition and stunting data, which
333 is still a problem in East Java. In particular, in the case of the discovery of malnutrition
334 and stunting data in Trenggalek and East Java. This debate occurred because more
335 data on stunting rates in East Java needed to be understood.

336 The issue of stunting and malnutrition data sparked a debate between candidate pairs.
337 This debate questioned the case of malnourished in Trenggalek Regency. *Detik*
338 contains quotes from candidates explaining that there needs to be more understanding
339 of data between indicators in malnutrition; malnutrition is different from stunting
340 indicators.

341 *"He said it was malnutrition. The news circulating in the mass media*
342 *also wrote like that. There is a lack of understanding of the data.*
343 *Now I ask what is the stunting rate in East Java?" (Detik, 10 April*
344 *2018)*

345 The other candidate pair explained that the stunting rate in Trenggalek Regency is
346 lower than the East Java Province rate.

347

348 *"And in Trenggalek, it is 24 percent, So it is below the East Java*
349 *figure" (Detik, 10 April 2018)*

350
351 Debates on malnutrition-related data have always been discussed in political debates
352 between candidates on social welfare and health issues. In addition to data, the debate
353 on stunting is related to environmental health issues, that the problem of stunting is

354 related to an adequate environment and adequate environmental sanitation facilities.

355 Candidates made this statement in the debate, as quoted in *Detik*.

356

357 *"Clearly, stunting is related to the environment. In Trenggalek, there*
358 *are villages with inadequate sanitation...,"* (*Detik*, 10 April 2018)

359

360 Another program the candidates promoted related to nutrition issues is still the
361 Supplementary Feeding Program (PMT).

362

363 *"Prosperous nutrition is so that pregnant women and their fetuses,*
364 *as well as toddlers and the elderly, get additional nutrients that are*
365 *beneficial for baby growth and endurance"* (*Antara*, 4 June 2018).

366

367 The candidate plans the nutrition program to redistribute health workers in villages to
368 improve access to health services.

369

370 *"The program provides nutrition from when the mother is pregnant*
371 *until the baby grows healthy. We assist mothers and their children*
372 *to be healthy and strong and become a proud generation one day.*
373 *We also deploy thousands of doctors and health workers to villages*
374 *so mothers and people in villages can easily access health*
375 *services"* (*Antara*, 4 June 2018).

376

377 In addition to the redistribution of health workers, there is also a program to assist
378 pregnant and birthing mothers. Not only that but to ensure access to services, data
379 collection is also carried out by making the *Prosperous Nutrition Card* (KNM). With this
380 card, candidates ensure that the poor can obtain nutritious food to fulfill the growth and
381 development of children. Quotes from *Republika* and *Berita Jatim* explain how the
382 candidate tried to make some populist programs.

383 *" Prosperous Nutrition Card (KNM) is a program to assist pregnant*
384 *women until delivery until the baby is born, and we make sure the*
385 *growth and development goes well"* (*Republika*, 30 May 2018)

386 *"There is a Prosperous Nutrition Card (KNM); pregnant women and*
387 *babies in East Java should not have difficulty accessing nutritious*
388 *food."* (*Republika*, 30 May 2018)

389 *"In addition, we send nutritious food, meat, eggs, fish, and fruit to*
390 *the homes of poor residents so that mothers do not have to worry*
391 *about the nutritional development of their families"* (*Berita Jatim*, 2
392 *June 2018*).

393 **Leprosy**

394 Leprosy is an infectious disease that is classified as an ancient disease, but the
395 problem of this disease is still high. Leprosy sufferers in East Java are still the highest
396 in Indonesia. This was recognized by the candidate as a form of full attention to health
397 issues in the region. The candidate's visit during the campaign at the Leprosy Hospital
398 in Mojokerto is interestingly included in the results of this research. Some quotes from
399 *Tribunnews* realized that the candidate was aware that the problem of leprosy in East
400 Java was serious and needed to be addressed.

401

402 *"One of East Java's homework is the problem of leprosy. East Java*
403 *has the highest number of leprosy patients in Indonesia"*
404 *(Tribunnews, 19 March 2018).*

405
406 The candidate's knowledge of leprosy cases worldwide can also be seen from the
407 following quote. Not only that, but candidates also know of leprosy cases, at least from
408 disease management and handling in specialized referral services, as well as the need
409 for community participation to support healing.

410 *"After that, they are empowered if they are cured. First given*
411 *medicine until the dependence on the medicine can be completed"*
412 *(Tribunnews, 19 March 2018).*

413
414 Candidates need to respond to the issue of stigma in some cases of the disease,
415 including leprosy patients. Moreover, during a visit to *Leprosy Village* (Kampung
416 Kusta), the candidate did not hesitate to shake hands and hug residents with leprosy.

417 *"So, I want to convey that leprosy is not a curse but a curable*
418 *disease" (Tribunnews, 19 March 2018).*

419

420

421

422

423 **Cigarette and Tobacco**

424 The issue of tobacco control is equally important as infectious diseases in
425 gubernatorial election campaigns. The candidates' stance on tobacco and cigarette
426 control policies during their campaign will determine the implementation of these
427 policies if elected. To understand the impact of the cigarette industry on local revenue
428 in East Java, candidates often visit it during the campaign. Despite this, a vast majority
429 of candidates fail to prioritize the issue of health problems caused by smoking, as
430 revealed in the following *Antara* quote.

431

1
2
3 432 *"Health is important, but the sustainability of cigarette companies*
4 433 *that involve much labor is also important. This is how we bring*
5 434 *together the interests of both" (Antara, 4 April 2018).*

6 435
7
8 436 According to the candidate, the sustainability of labor-intensive cigarette companies
9 437 requires more attention than health issues, which on the other hand, is an important
10 438 issue. Candidates see that the potential of East Java, especially Jember as a cigar
11 439 producer, can be a good potential economic sector. In another quote, the candidate
12 440 encourages pro-tobacco farmer policies, strengthening exports as a strategic
13 441 commodity due to the labor-intensive sector.

14
15 442 *"At the policy level, this must be done wisely and thoroughly so as*
16 443 *not to harm the interests of farmers. One of them is by strengthening*
17 444 *exports because tobacco is one of the strategic commodities that is*
18 445 *also the livelihood of many people in East Java," (Antara, 29 March*
19 446 *2018).*

20
21 447 In addition to preparing a policy plan to strengthen exports, the efficiency, and
22 448 effectiveness of tobacco processing in the future with new technology. As a leading
23 449 commodity in East Java, tobacco needs a remarkable breakthrough to answer global
24 450 competition. In a quote from *Tribunnews*, the candidate encourages sectors such as
25 451 the clove cigarette industry with manual by-hand processing, abbreviated as *Sigaret*
26 452 *Kretek Tangan* (SKT), to get privileges compared to the machine-powered cigarette
27 453 industry.

28
29 454 *"The SKT cigarette factory MPS is all labor-intensive. And this MPS*
30 455 *(tobacco manufacture in East Java) 95 percent of its workers are*
31 456 *the backbone of the family economy, even when recruiting in its*
32 457 *Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) does not require graduation*
33 458 *standards, there are elementary, junior high school graduates"*
34 459 *(Tribunnews, 31 May 2018).*

35
36 460 Minimizing cigarette tax, the candidate conveyed the privilege of *Sigaret Kretek*
37 461 *Tangan* (SKT).

38
39 462 *"SKT must get a privilege compared to Machine-rolled Clove*
40 463 *Cigarettes/Sigaret Kretek Mesin (SKM). The excise tax must be*
41 464 *minimized" (Tribunnews, 31 May 2018).*

42
43 465 The arguments presented by the candidate during their political campaign regarding
44 466 tobacco and the tobacco industry do not meet expectations with regards to public
45 467 health concerns about policies aimed at controlling tobacco consumption. While the
46 468 candidates agree that the tobacco industry is an important sector for economic growth,
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 469 they seem to place less emphasis on health concerns in comparison. In online media
4
5 470 excerpts, the candidates should clearly state their position on the issue of regulating
6
7 471 the tobacco industry.

8
9 472

10 473 **Healthy Living Behaviors**

11
12 474 As contradictory to the issue of smoking and tobacco, the candidate encouraged
13
14 475 several healthy lifestyle activities and sports. *Berita Jatim* quotes about the candidate's
15
16 476 activities and support for healthy lifestyles.

17
18 477 *"Car Free Day (CFD) areas in various cities have metamorphosed*
19 478 *into not only a place to maintain health but also a center for*
20 479 *interaction" (Berita Jatim, 6 May 2018).*

21 480

22 481 Exercise is also considered a means of interaction. As quoted by *Antara*, a healthy
23
24 482 lifestyle understood by the candidate is by doing sports activities and eating fruits and
25
26 483 vegetables. This is certainly different when candidates are asked about the tobacco
27
28 484 industry and health. They seem to be consistent with the two.

29 485 *"There are two messages from me so that we always healthy life,*
30 486 *the first is exercise, and the second is to eat fruits and vegetables*
31 487 *regularly" (Antara, 8 April 2018).*

32 488

34 489 **Health Pregnancy and Breastfeeding**

35
36 490 The issue of women's health itself cannot be separated from issues surrounding labor.
37
38 491 Candidates highlighted the issue of maternity leave regulations being considered
39
40 492 insufficient by workers, an issue captured by candidates as material for their political
41
42 493 campaigns. Candidates see the problem of insufficient maternity leave as having
43
44 494 implications for the productivity and health of pregnant women and their children's
45
46 495 future. As quoted in the following *Berita Jatim*.

47 496 *"Currently, there is a three-month maternity leave regulation.*
48 497 *Workers feel it is insufficient" (Berita Jatim, 9 April 2018).*

49 498 *"This solution is not only for the productivity and health of the mother*
50 499 *but also for the future of her child." (Berita Jatim, 9 April 2018)*

51 500

52
53
54 501 Due to the short maternity leave period for mothers after giving birth, the candidate
55
56 502 encourages companies and agencies to provide lactation facilities in the workplace as
57
58 503 another way to fulfill the quality of exclusive breastfeeding.

504 *"We will also encourage companies and agencies to provide*
505 *lactation facilities to breastfeeding mothers. So their children will be*
506 *able to get exclusive breastfeeding opportunities" (Berita Jatim, 9*
507 *April 2018).*

508 Candidates also have specific plans to encourage the involvement of women's
509 elements to ensure gender-oriented development planning. This will later become a
510 provincial program.

511 *"We will even make a special Development Planning Conference*
512 *on women's issues, involving all elements from Muslimat, Aisyiyah,*
513 *Fatayat, Family Welfare Education (PKK), NGOs, academics,*
514 *student groups, etc. We compile the aspirations of strengthening*
515 *women together to be ratified into a provincial program" (Berita*
516 *Jatim, 9 April 2018).*

517 **Disability**

518 Disability issues are not very interesting to discuss in candidates' political campaigns
519 but of the many issues. One quote in Detik shows that one of the candidates has a
520 special program in favor of people with disabilities.

521 *"...does have a pro-disability program. We will encourage local*
522 *governments to build infrastructure that provides space for people*
523 *with disabilities" (Detik, 8 April 2018).*

524 The program encourages local governments to build infrastructure to provide fair
525 space for people with disabilities.

526 **Discussion**

527 This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the coverage of health issues in
528 news articles related to the 2018 East Java regional election campaign. The study
529 finds that health issues received limited coverage, accounting for at most 6% of all
530 election news in selected online media portals. This indicates a lack of emphasis on
531 health as an important issue among local communities, possibly due to other more
532 pressing issues such as economic development or social welfare. The relationship
533 between media and politics has always been complex and delicate. This is especially
534 true in local politics, where media outlets are crucial in shaping public opinion and
535 influencing political decision-making (Hoewe & Peacock, 2020). As such, the media
536 can shape public opinion on political issues and influence the outcome of local
537 elections (Keith R. Stamm et al., 1997). At the same time, political actors also
538 significantly impact local media. Politicians and their campaigns often seek to shape

539 media coverage to their advantage, using tactics such as manipulation, spin, and
540 selective information leaking (Gil de Zúñiga & Chen, 2019).

541 The research emphasizes the crucial role of the media in informing the public about
542 health issues and political candidates' positions on them, particularly the reach of the
543 online media field (Calnan, 2020; Ganatra, 2021). The media is responsible for
544 providing voters with accurate and comprehensive information on health issues and
545 prioritizing coverage of these issues in election campaigns. However, the limited
546 coverage of health issues in news articles may reflect media priorities or their
547 perception of public interest (Bou-Karroum et al., 2017). In local politics, the media has
548 significant power in shaping public opinion and influencing regional political policies.

549 Despite candidates' limited use of health issues as political campaign material, the
550 study reveals that health remains an alternative political agenda. The candidates'
551 positions on these issues suggest that health can be a significant factor in their
552 campaign platforms and electoral success, highlighting the importance of a clear
553 stance and well-defined policy agenda on health issues (Benning et al., 2020; Conway
554 et al., 2015). Although the quantity of health issues discussed in local campaigns is
555 petite, politicians still use populist issues about health in their campaigns (Oliver,
556 2006). Healthcare programs are part of political campaigns because healthcare is a
557 crucial issue that affects many people and can be a deciding factor for voters,
558 especially healthcare for poor people. Overall, the study highlights the need for more
559 comprehensive and accurate coverage of health issues in election campaigns and
560 underscores the significance of health issues as a political agenda.

561

562 **Conclusion**

563 The study suggests limited coverage of health issues during election campaigns,
564 but candidates' positions reveal its impact on their platform and success. The media's
565 crucial role in informing the public and ensuring comprehensive coverage of health
566 issues and policies is highlighted. The study underscores health issues' significance
567 as a political agenda and the media's responsibility in promoting informed decision-
568 making among voters.

569 In conclusion, the study highlights the need for comprehensive and accurate
570 coverage of health issues in election campaigns. The significance of health issues as
571 a political agenda is demonstrated, emphasizing the importance of candidate positions
572 on health issues. The research underscores the crucial role of the media in informing

573 the public about health issues and the need for them to prioritize coverage of these
574 issues during election campaigns. The study can improve health policies and
575 outcomes in the local election campaign by raising awareness of health issues and
576 promoting informed decision-making among voters.

577

578 References

- 579 Ali, D. J. & Eriyanto. (2021). Political polarization and selective exposure of social
580 media users in indonesia. *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik*, 24(3), 268–283.
581 Scopus. <https://doi.org/10.22146/JSP.58199>
- 582 Bambra, C., Fox, D., & Scott-Samuel, A. (2005). Towards a politics of health. *Health
583 Promotion International*, 20(2), 187–193.
584 <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dah608>
- 585 Benning, T. J., Ashby, G. B., & Chapp, C. B. (2020). Frequency and Specificity of
586 Pediatric Health Policy Discussions in Political Campaigns. *JAMA Pediatrics*,
587 174(8), 795. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.0932>
- 588 Bou-Karroum, L., El-Jardali, F., Hemadi, N., Faraj, Y., Ojha, U., Shahrour, M., Darzi,
589 A., Ali, M., Doumit, C., Langlois, E. V., Melki, J., AbouHaidar, G. H., & Akl, E.
590 A. (2017). Using media to impact health policy-making: An integrative
591 systematic review. *Implementation Science*, 12(1), 52.
592 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-017-0581-0>
- 593 Calnan, M. (2020). Framing Health Policy in the Media. In *Health Policy, Power and
594 Politics: Sociological Insights* (pp. 87–101). Emerald Publishing Limited.
595 <https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83909-394-420201008>
- 596 Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2014). Thematic Analysis. In T. Teo (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of
597 Critical Psychology* (pp. 1947–1952). Springer New York.
598 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7_311
- 599 Conway, B. A., Kenski, K., & Wang, D. (2015). The Rise of Twitter in the Political
600 Campaign: Searching for Intermedia Agenda-Setting Effects in the Presidential
601 Primary. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 20(4), 363–380.
602 <https://doi.org/10/f7kr8b>
- 603 Curini, L. (2018). The Direction of Valence Campaigning in Two Dimensions. In L.
604 Curini (Ed.), *Corruption, Ideology, and Populism: The Rise of Valence Political
605 Campaigning* (pp. 117–146). Springer International Publishing.
606 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-56735-8_4
- 607 Eskawati, M. Y., Murti, B., & Tamtomo, D. (2018). Implementation of the Referral
608 System Policy in the National Health Insurance Scheme at Community Health
609 Centers, Ngawi District, East Java. *Journal of Health Policy and Management*,
610 2(2), 104–113. <https://doi.org/10.26911/thejhpm.2017.02.02.01>
- 611 Fossati, D. (2017). From periphery to centre: Local government and the emergence of
612 universal healthcare in Indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia: A Journal of
613 International and Strategic Affairs*, 39(1), 178–203.
- 614 Fowler, E. F., Baum, L., Jesch, E., Haddad, D., Reyes, C., Gollust, S. E., &
615 Niederdeppe, J. (2019). Issues Relevant to Population Health in Political
616 Advertising in the United States, 2011-2012 and 2015-2016. *The Milbank
617 Quarterly*, 97(4), 1062–1107. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0009.12427>

- 1
2
3 618 Ganatra, K. (2021). Modern Health Journalism and the Impact of Social Media. *Journal*
4 619 *of Korean Medical Science*, 36(22), 1–5.
5 620 <https://doi.org/10.3346/JKMS.2021.36.E162>
6
7 621 Gil de Zúñiga, H., & Chen, H.-T. (2019). Digital Media and Politics: Effects of the Great
8 622 Information and Communication Divides. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic*
9 623 *Media*, 63(3), 365–373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2019.1662019>
10 624 Gollust, S. E., Fowler, E. F., & Niederdeppe, J. (2019). Television News Coverage of
11 625 Public Health Issues and Implications for Public Health Policy and Practice.
12 626 *Annual Review of Public Health*, 40(1), 167–185.
13 627 <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040218-044017>
14 628 Guallar, J. (2017). Content Curation in Digital Media: Between Retrospective and
15 629 Real-Time Information. In F. C. Freire, X. Rúa Araújo, V. A. Martínez
16 630 Fernández, & X. L. García (Eds.), *Media and Metamedia Management* (pp. 37–
17 631 46). Springer International Publishing. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-46068-0_6)
18 632 [46068-0_6](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-46068-0_6)
19 633 Hoewe, J., & Peacock, C. (2020). The power of media in shaping political attitudes.
20 634 *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 34, 19–24.
21 635 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cobeha.2019.11.005>
22 636 Jensen, M. J. (2017). Social Media and Political Campaigning: Changing Terms of
23 637 Engagement? *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22(1), 23–42.
24 638 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216673196>
25 639 Jo, W., & You, M. (2019). News media's framing of health policy and its implications
26 640 for government communication: A text mining analysis of news coverage on a
27 641 policy to expand health insurance coverage in South Korea. *Health Policy*,
28 642 123(11), 1116–1124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthpol.2019.07.011>
29 643 Jung, E. (2016). Campaigning for All Indonesians: The Politics of Healthcare in
30 644 Indonesia. *Contemporary Southeast Asia*, 38(3), 476–494.
31 645 <https://doi.org/10.1355/cs38-3e>
32 646 Keith R. Stamm, Arthur G. Emig, Michael B. Hesse, & Michael B. Hesse. (1997). The
33 647 Contribution of Local Media to Community Involvement. *Journalism & Mass*
34 648 *Communication Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10/c2jwbw>
35 649 Khoiri, A., Hidayat, W., Chalidyanto, D., & Suhariadi, F. (2020). Disposition of Policy
36 650 Implementers: Study on The Hospitals Payment System Change in The
37 651 Indonesian National Health Insurance Era. *Indian Journal of Forensic Medicine*
38 652 *& Toxicology*, 14(4), 689–696. <https://doi.org/10.37506/ijfamt.v14i4.11568>
39 653 Lilleker, D. G. (2014). Voting and Voter Decision-Making. In D. G. Lilleker (Ed.),
40 654 *Political Communication and Cognition* (pp. 177–197). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
41 655 https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137313430_10
42 656 Lipsitz, K., Trost, C., Grossmann, M., & Sides, J. (2005). What Voters Want From
43 657 Political Campaign Communication. *Political Communication*, 22(3), 337–354.
44 658 <https://doi.org/10/c9kzzw>
45 659 Navarro, V., & Shi, L. (2001). The political context of social inequalities and health.
46 660 *Social Science and Medicine*, 11. <https://doi.org/10/cqxzg2>
47 661 Oliver, T. R. (2006). The politics of public health policy. *Annual Review of Public*
48 662 *Health*, 27(1), 195–233.
49 663 <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.25.101802.123126>
50 664 Pisani, E., Kok, M. O., & Nugroho, K. (2017). Indonesia's road to universal health
51 665 coverage: A political journey. *Health Policy Plan.*, 32(2), 267–276.
52 666 <https://doi.org/10/gmnqfv>
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3 667 Putri, N. K., Wulandari, R. D., Syahansyah, R. J., & Grépin, K. A. (2021). Determinants
4 668 of out-of-district health facility bypassing in East Java, Indonesia. *International*
5 669 *Health*, 13(6), 545–554. <https://doi.org/10.1093/inthealth/ihaa104>
6 670 Rathomi, H. S., Yulianto, F. A., & Romadhona, N. (2018). Dampak Program Jaminan
7 671 Kesehatan Nasional Terhadap Utilisasi Layanan Kesehatan Pasien Kanker
8 672 Serviks. *Jurnal Kebijakan Kesehatan Indonesia: JKKI*, 7(3), 126–133.
9 673 <https://doi.org/10.22146/jkki.38260>
10 674 Ridlo, I. (2018, February 17). Isu Kesehatan dalam Kampanye Pilkada. *Jawa Pos*, 4.
11 675 [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323550533_Isu_Kesehatan_Dalam_](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323550533_Isu_Kesehatan_Dalam_Kampanye_Pilkada)
12 676 [Kampanye_Pilkada](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323550533_Isu_Kesehatan_Dalam_Kampanye_Pilkada)
13 677 Wibowo, N. M., Utari, W., Widiastuti, Y., & Muhith, A. (2023). Quality Control of Health
14 678 Services of The National Health Insurance Era in East Java - Indonesia:
15 679 Barriers and Strategy. *KnE Social Sciences*, 709–717.
16 680 <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v8i4.12965>
17 681 Wulandari, R. D., Laksono, A. D., Rohmah, N., & Ashar, H. (2023). Regional
18 682 differences in primary healthcare utilization in Java Region—Indonesia. *PLOS*
19 683 *ONE*, 18(3), e0283709. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0283709>
20 684
21 685
22 686
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Searching news articles reporting gubernatorial election
in national and local media online portal
(Keyword: "Pilkada Jawa Timur 2018"; "Khofifah" "Emil" "Saifulah Yusuf"; "Puti")

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40

1,769 news articles indentified from national media online search
(Antara, Jawa Pos, Republika, Kompas, Viva News, Tempo)

2,254 news articles indentified from local media online search
(Berita Jatim, Detik Jatim, Tribunnews Surabaya)

Total combined news articles reporting
(N=4,023)

Excluded news articles NOT
related health issues (n=3828)

Screening for news article content refers to health issue
(n=195)

Duplicates removed (n=82)

Records screened for news article content
refers to health issue (n=113)

Records selection quotes refers to
health issues (n=39)

Analysis selection quotes refers to health issues (n=39)

- Quotes refers to health issues in gubernatorial election
- 1. Health financing and facilities (n=13)
 - 2. Health worker (n=4)
 - 3. Malnutrition and stunting (n=8)
 - 4. Leprosy (n=3)
 - 5. Cigarettes and tobacco (n=4)
 - 6. Healthy living behaviour (n=2)
 - 7. Health pregnancy and breastfeeding (n=4)
 - 8. Disability (n=1)

39 quotes selected for
thematic analysis