

Exclusive Breastfeeding Education for Pregnant Women to Help Reduce Stunting in Selebung Village, Batukliang District

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Article history

Submitted: 2024/12/14; Revised: 2025/01/01; Accepted: 2025/01/29

Abstract

Stunting is a serious nutritional problem in Indonesia that can hinder children's physical and cognitive development. Based on data on the prevalence of stunting in toddlers collected by WHO, Indonesia is among the third countries with the highest prevalence in the Southeast Asia region. One effective effort to prevent stunting is to provide exclusive breastfeeding to babies from birth in accordance with one of the goals of the SDG's (Sustainable Development Goals) program, namely ending all forms of malnutrition with a strategic plan (renstra) to increase the percentage of babies under 6 months who receive exclusive breastfeeding. This community service activity aims to provide education about Exclusive Breastfeeding for pregnant women as an effort to reduce the incidence of stunting. This community service method uses Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) with educational counseling techniques assisted by flip sheet media. The target of this community service activity is pregnant women at the Polindes in Selebung Village, Aik Darek Health Center, Batukliang District, Central Lombok Regency. The results of this community service activity show an increase in pregnant women's understanding of Exclusive Breastfeeding. It is hoped that by increasing the knowledge and awareness of pregnant women, there will be a decrease in stunting rates in Selebung Village, as well as improving the quality of maternal and child health in the area.

Keywords

Health Education, Pregnant Women, Exclusive Breastfeeding, Stunting.



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INTRODUCTION

Exclusive Breastfeeding is the provision of breast milk or breast milk for babies from birth to 6 months of age without being replaced by other drinks and foods. In general, the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding for babies and breastfeeding mothers are optimizing the baby's development [1], strengthening the immune system, minimizing the appearance of allergies, helping to achieve the ideal weight, lowering the risk of breast cancer of the mother, reducing the risk of bleeding in the mother after childbirth, maintaining the mother's weight, as a natural birth control, strengthening the bond between mother and child [2]. The World Health Organization (WHO) and

UNICEF recommend that children start breastfeeding within the first hour after birth and breastfeed exclusively for the first 6 months of life, which means that no other food or drinks are provided, including water [3].

Nutrition problems are global health problems because they occur in all parts of the world. Malnutrition can slow down the process of children's growth and development. Children who have growth and development problems have a suboptimal level of intelligence and are susceptible to diseases so that they are at risk of decreasing productivity in the future which can limit the economic development of a country [4]. Of the 83.6 million stunted children under five in Asia, the largest proportion comes from South Asia (58.7%) and the least proportion in Central Asia (0.9%). Data on the prevalence of stunting among children under five collected by WHO, Indonesia is included in the third country with the highest prevalence in the Southeast Asian region [5].

The incidence of stunting is one of the nutritional problems experienced by toddlers in the world today. In 2017, 22.2% or around 150.8 million children under five in the world were stunted. However, the stunting rate in 2000 was 32.6%. In 2017, more than half of the world's stunted children under five were from Asia (55%) while more than a third (39%) lived in Africa [6]. Based on the results of the SSGI in 2021, the stunting rate nationally decreased by 1.6% per year from 27.7% in 2019 to 24.4% in 2021. Almost most of the 34 provinces showed a decrease compared to 2019 and only 5 provinces showed an increase. This shows that the implementation of government policies to encourage the acceleration of stunting reduction in Indonesia has given quite good results, but must continue to implement programs that support stunting reduction, one of which is by consistently providing education about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding as an effort to reduce stunting rates [7].

The West Nusa Tenggara Provincial Government recorded stunting cases reaching 23.51% in 2020 based on data obtained from the community-based Nutrition Recording and Reporting Application (e-PPGBM). Of the 10 districts/cities in NTB, North Lombok Regency (KLU) and Mataram City were recorded to have the highest stunting cases, 33.8% and 30.11%, respectively, while based on the data from the 2020 weighing week, stunted toddlers were found in NTB Province of 77,037 toddlers, the highest cases were in Central Lombok Regency with 20,513 stunted toddlers and the lowest was found in Bima City with 870 stunted toddlers [8]. As one of the regencies in NTB, Central Lombok contributes a fairly high number of stunting cases because in 2019 as many as 29% of children under five were under five. Central Lombok Regency was identified as experiencing stunting [9]. This number shows an increase in stunting

cases in Central Lombok Regency compared to the previous year, although this figure decreased in 2020 to 18,471 children (27.79%). The large number of stunting is a big challenge for the implementation of efforts to improve public health in Central Lombok Regency in the future [10]. Meanwhile, based on the profile data of the West Nusa Tenggara Health Office, the prevalence of short toddlers based on (TB/U) has increased. In 2022 it was at 19.23% compared to 16.84% in 2021 [11].

Aik Darek Health Center is one of the health centers in Central Lombok Regency. Based on data from the Aik Darek Health Center, it is known that there were 914 stunting cases in 2020, 753 cases in 2021, and 755 cases in 2022. The working area of the Aik Darek Health Center consists of 5 villages, namely Aik Darek Village, Selebung Village, Beber Village, Mekar Bersatu Village, Pagutan Village. The results of weighing toddlers in November 2023 showed that Selebung Village had 118 cases of stunting [12].

Based on this background, this service was carried out with the aim of providing Exclusive Breastfeeding education to help reduce stunting rates so that pregnant women know the impact of providing exclusive breastfeeding, so that pregnant women will later become mothers of children who have healthy offspring and a quality life. It is hoped that with the increase in knowledge and awareness of pregnant women, there can be a decrease in the stunting rate in Selebung Village, as well as improve the quality of maternal and child health in the area.

METHODS

This method of service uses the approach Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). PRA is an approach used to collect and analyze information about a community with the active participation of community members [13]. The stages of implementing this community service activity are through health education about exclusive breastfeeding to prevent stunting. The delivery of material was carried out using lecture techniques and flip sheet media to make it easier for the target to understand the content of the material delivered by the speakers. Lecture techniques in this activity include discussion and question and answer. Meanwhile, the flip sheet media contains Exclusive Breastfeeding material and how to give Exclusive Breastfeeding. The use of flip sheet media aims to attract the interest of the target so that they better understand the material provided so that the purpose of this service activity can be achieved, namely it is hoped that the target can understand, remember and there will be a change in behavior towards good exclusive breastfeeding.

The target of this service activity is pregnant women with a total of 15 people. This activity was carried out at the Polindes of Selebung Village, Batukliang District,

Central Lombok Regency. The stages in the implementation of this service activity include: 1) conducting a location survey, 2) taking care of permits, 3) implementing activities in the form of providing health education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity with the title "Exclusive Breastfeeding Education for Pregnant Women to Help Reduce Stunting in Selebung Village, Batukliang District" aims to provide pregnant women with a better understanding of the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for their babies, with a focus on reducing stunting rates. This activity was carried out in the form of educational sessions, interactive discussions, and distribution of educational materials which was carried out on Monday, December 11, 2023. The stages in this community service activity include: 1) conducting a location survey, 2) taking care of permits, 3) implementing activities in the form of providing health education. This activity was attended by 15 pregnant women from various age groups and educational backgrounds. The majority of participants showed high enthusiasm to participate in the education session.



Figure 1. Provision of Educational Materials for Exclusive Breastfeeding

In general, this service activity is carried out to provide knowledge and understanding about exclusive breastfeeding as an effort to help reduce stunting rates. Most of the participants gave a positive response to this activity, especially related to the new information obtained about Exclusive Breastfeeding. Some pregnant women expressed a desire to delve deeper into this information and continue the practice of exclusive breastfeeding after giving birth. Some participants also revealed that they were initially hesitant to give exclusive breastfeeding due to various factors, such as difficulty breastfeeding, lack of support from the surrounding environment, or lack of knowledge about breastfeeding. After getting a more in-depth explanation, most pregnant women express the belief to breastfeed exclusively during the first 6 months

of their baby's life.

Education about Exclusive Breastfeeding for pregnant women has a very important role in efforts to reduce stunting, which is a serious public health problem in Indonesia, including in Selebung Village, Batukliang District. Stunting can have a negative impact on children's physical growth and cognitive development, which can affect the quality of human resources in the future. One of the main factors causing the low level of exclusive breastfeeding is the lack of knowledge of pregnant women about the benefits of breastfeeding. Health education through educational programs like this is very effective in increasing the awareness of pregnant women about the benefits of Exclusive Breastfeeding. Increasing understanding of the role of breastfeeding in preventing stunting is very important to encourage pregnant women to be more committed to exclusive breastfeeding after childbirth.

Some pregnant women in Selebung Village said that they had difficulty in providing exclusive breastfeeding, both due to limited family support and local culture that did not support full breastfeeding. This education is very relevant to minimize these barriers, by providing correct and in-depth information on ways to overcome these challenges, such as breast care, partner support, and the importance of family roles. One of the goals of health education is to improve the ability of individuals, families, groups and communities to be able to live a healthy life [14]. Every provision of health education is closely related to the media because the use of media can convey information that is more interesting, and easy to understand. The media used in this activity is the media Leaflets Because in general, the delivery of health education using the lecture method will be accompanied by the provision of Leaflets, where the content of Leaflets These are the messages given during the delivery of material using lectures [15].

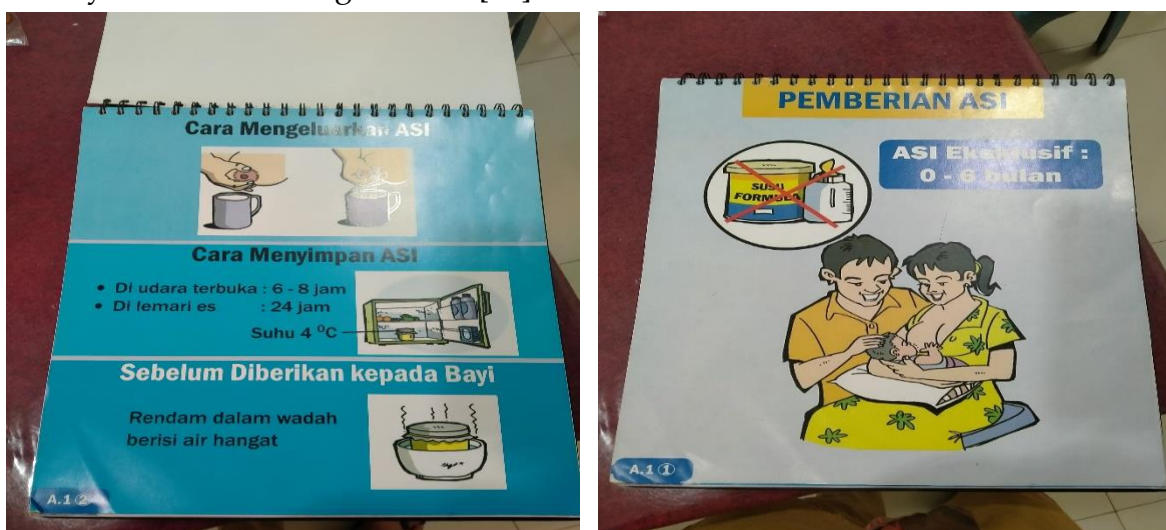


Figure 2. Media Flip Sheet About Exclusive Breastfeeding

In addition, the use of flip sheet media in this service activity is based on the principle that knowledge is obtained or received by individuals through the five senses. Thus, the more the five senses are used, the more and clearer the knowledge is acceptable. Susilowati's theory in Yulastini, et al. states that the effectiveness of media in improving audience understanding using a combination of verbal and visual media is 6 times more effective than using only one of the verbal or visual media [16]. In addition, Wibur in Susilowati said that conveying information using media is the right technique because media can encourage the learning process in the target person [17]. Overall, this community service activity shows a positive impact in increasing the knowledge of pregnant women about exclusive breastfeeding and its role in prevention stunting.

The findings of this community service activity align with previous studies that emphasize the crucial role of exclusive breastfeeding in reducing stunting rates among children. Various studies have shown that exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life significantly improves infant health outcomes, reducing the risk of malnutrition and infection, both of which contribute to stunting. According to WHO and UNICEF, exclusive breastfeeding should be initiated within the first hour of birth and continued exclusively for six months to ensure optimal growth and development of infants [18]. The research findings in Selebung Village support this recommendation, as pregnant women who received education about exclusive breastfeeding demonstrated increased awareness and commitment to practicing exclusive breastfeeding.

The study also corresponds with the theory that limited knowledge and cultural barriers often hinder the adoption of exclusive breastfeeding practices. Similar findings were reported in studies conducted in other regions of Indonesia, where low awareness and insufficient family support were identified as major obstacles to exclusive breastfeeding [19]. In Selebung Village, several participants initially expressed concerns regarding difficulties in breastfeeding, a lack of support from their surroundings, and misconceptions about the adequacy of breast milk. However, after receiving proper education and exposure to supportive materials such as flip sheets, their perceptions shifted positively, indicating that structured health education plays a vital role in addressing such barriers.

The effectiveness of educational interventions in changing health behaviors has been widely documented in public health literature. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, knowledge acquisition is enhanced when individuals receive information through engaging and interactive methods. The use of flip sheets in this

study further reinforced this principle, as participants were able to visually grasp important concepts while engaging in discussions [20]. This aligns with previous studies that suggest that combining verbal and visual media increases knowledge retention and behavioral changes. Yulastini also emphasized that a combination of verbal and visual learning is up to six times more effective than using a single modality.

Moreover, the findings of this research reaffirm the significance of family and community support in ensuring successful exclusive breastfeeding practices. Prior research indicates that maternal confidence in breastfeeding increases when family members, particularly spouses and extended relatives, provide encouragement and assistance [21]. The discussions conducted during the educational sessions in Selebung Village highlighted the necessity of involving family members in breastfeeding promotion efforts. This aligns with the concept of community-based health education, which underscores the role of collective support systems in influencing individual health behaviors.

The decreasing trend of stunting cases in Indonesia in recent years can be attributed to various government initiatives promoting exclusive breastfeeding, among other nutritional interventions. The findings from this study further validate that consistent education efforts at the grassroots level can significantly contribute to stunting prevention. However, the results also indicate that knowledge dissemination alone may not be sufficient; practical support mechanisms, such as access to lactation counseling and breastfeeding-friendly environments, must also be strengthened.

In conclusion, this research contributes to the growing body of evidence demonstrating that exclusive breastfeeding education is a powerful tool in the fight against stunting. By addressing knowledge gaps, dispelling myths, and fostering supportive environments, such educational programs can lead to sustainable improvements in maternal and child health. Future initiatives should consider integrating community engagement strategies, continuous monitoring, and reinforcement activities to ensure long-term adherence to exclusive breastfeeding practices.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity successfully provided pregnant women in Selebung Village with a better understanding of the importance of exclusive breastfeeding in preventing stunting. The educational sessions increased awareness, addressed misconceptions, and encouraged positive behavioral changes regarding exclusive breastfeeding practices. As a result, it is expected that the participants will

apply this knowledge by exclusively breastfeeding their babies for the first six months, thereby supporting optimal child growth and reducing the risk of stunting.

To ensure the sustainability and broader impact of this initiative, future programs should expand their reach to more pregnant women and involve key stakeholders such as healthcare workers, family members, and community leaders. Additionally, continuous education and postnatal support, including breastfeeding counseling and peer support groups, should be implemented to reinforce the practice of exclusive breastfeeding. By fostering a supportive environment, this initiative can contribute to long-term improvements in maternal and child health in Selebung Village and beyond.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The community service team would like to thank the Selebung Village Police of the Aik Darek Health Center Working Area, Batukliang District, Central Lombok Regency as partners in this activity. Thank you also to the Institute for Research and Community Service of Qamarul Huda Badaruddin University for supporting this service activity.

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