
Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers at Helen Clinic

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Abstract

Diarrhea remains one of the leading causes of death among toddlers in Indonesia, especially in North Sumatra Province. Mothers' lack of knowledge about the treatment and prevention of diarrhea can worsen the condition of toddlers suffering from diarrhea. This study aims to determine mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers and the characteristics of mothers based on age, education, and occupation at Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025. This study used a descriptive survey method with a quantitative approach. Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling of mothers who had infants aged 12–59 months. Data were collected using a questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability. The results showed that of the 30 respondents, 33.3% had good knowledge, 40% had adequate knowledge, and 26.7% had poor knowledge. Most respondents were aged 21–35 years (66.7%), had a high school education (55.3%), and worked as housewives (36.7%). Conclusion: Most mothers have sufficient knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers. Therefore, mothers are expected to be more active in seeking information about diarrhea in toddlers, and health workers/clinics are expected to always provide education or counseling during immunization or by providing leaflets at clinics so that mothers who visit the clinic can read useful information and gain insight about diarrhea in toddlers.

Keywords: Maternal Knowledge, Diarrhea, Infants

INTRODUCTION

Diarrhea is still one of the leading causes of morbidity and mortality in toddlers in Indonesia, especially in North Sumatra Province. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that there are approximately 1.7 billion cases of diarrhea each year that infect children under five years of age, with more than 525,000 deaths due to this condition (WHO, 2023). At the national level, the Indonesian Health Survey (2023) shows that the prevalence of diarrhea in toddlers reaches 7.4% (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2023). In addition, North Sumatra is recorded as the province with the highest prevalence of diarrhea in toddlers in Indonesia (Sulistyaningsih & Prajayanti, 2023).

Mothers' knowledge of diarrhea in children is crucial in its prevention and treatment. Personal hygiene behaviors, including hand washing habits, exclusive breastfeeding, and the use of clean water, are greatly influenced by mothers' knowledge (Swarjana, 2022; Dacing et al., 2023). However, various studies show that the majority of mothers still have insufficient knowledge about the prevention and treatment of diarrhea, as in studies at the Air Itam Community Health Center (Bangka Belitung) and the Pamulang Community Health Center (Fitri, 2017; Ghassani & Melani, 2023).

Although national and regional data are available, specific research on mothers' knowledge of infant diarrhea in private health facilities, such as clinics, is still limited. Previous research at the Putri Ayu Community Health Center in Jambi confirmed a significant relationship between mothers' level of knowledge and the incidence of diarrhea in toddlers, but the context of private clinics such as the Helen Tarigan Clinic has not been widely explored (Made et al., 2023; Anastasiani et al., 2023). In fact, private clinics are often the starting point for mothers' interactions with health workers, so understanding this condition is important for designing targeted educational interventions.

A preliminary survey at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in January 2025 showed that 6 out of 25 respondents had insufficient knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers. Some mothers considered the main

cause of diarrhea to be eating random snacks, when in fact personal hygiene factors, such as dirty nails and the habit of putting hands in the mouth, have a greater influence on the incidence of diarrhea (Musfiratu 'Azma et al., 2024). This condition indicates a gap in practical knowledge that has the potential to worsen the health risks of toddlers.

These findings are in line with the research by Anastasiani et al. (2023), which showed that 66.7% of respondents had a low level of knowledge, while only 33.3% had good knowledge. Demographic factors such as age, education, and occupation of mothers were found to influence the level of knowledge (Komara et al., 2020; Ghassani & Melani, 2023). Therefore, it is important to assess mothers' knowledge at the Helen Tarigan Clinic by considering these demographic characteristics.

This study aims to describe mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers and identify mothers' characteristics based on age, education, and occupation at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025. The urgency of this study lies in its contribution to designing more effective health education strategies, such as routine counseling during immunization and the provision of information media at clinics. The novelty of this study is its focus on private primary clinics in North Sumatra, which are still rarely studied, thus providing a new empirical perspective in efforts to prevent diarrhea in toddlers.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative descriptive survey design to describe mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025. This method allows researchers to obtain a systematic and objective picture of the phenomenon, in accordance with the quantitative survey approach (Sugiyono, 2021; Creswell & Creswell, 2022). Quantitative descriptive surveys aim to map the conditions or characteristics of a population as they are, and are very suitable for this study, which seeks to explain mothers' knowledge (Sugiyono, 2021).

The target population of this study was all mothers who had toddlers aged 12–59 months and visited the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025 (Roflin, 2021). Using purposive sampling, this study selected samples that met the criteria—namely, mothers of toddlers aged 12–59 months who were willing to be respondents so that the samples were representative of the study objectives (Kumara, 2018; Sudaryono, 2022).

The data collection instrument was a closed-ended checklist questionnaire, compiled based on the operational definitions of the variables (e.g., maternal knowledge, age, education, occupation) with ordinal and ratio scales as needed (Bungin, 2024). Each item was tested for validity using the product-moment method, and its reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which shows the consistency of the instrument (Anggraeni et al., 2023; Roflin, 2021).

Data collection was conducted during the period from May 23 to June 1, 2025, at the Helen Tarigan Clinic. The research procedure began with permission from the institutional ethics committee (No. 06/KEPK-SE/PE-DT/V/2025), followed by coordination with the clinic, delivery of informed consent, explanation of the purpose and method of completing the questionnaire, and direct data collection (Anggraeni et al., 2023). The ethical aspects of the research were also maintained, including the principles of voluntariness, informed consent, anonymity, and data confidentiality (Setiana, 2021).

Data analysis used a univariate approach, which focused on the frequency distribution and percentage of each variable (e.g., knowledge was categorized as good, sufficient, and poor), in accordance with quantitative descriptive methods (Evellin, 2020; Emzir, 2022). This approach is simple but effective for describing the characteristics of respondents and their general knowledge.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Frequency Distribution of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025

Based on the respondents' knowledge regarding mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers at Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025, this study will be described in the table below.

Table 1 Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025

Knowledge Level	Frequency(f)	Percentage(%)
Good	11	36.7
Adequate	12	40
Poor	7	26.7
Total	30	100

Based on the table above, mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025 was mostly adequate, with 12 people (40%), good with 11 people (36.7%), and poor with 7 people (26.7%).

Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Based on the characteristics of respondents related to mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025. In this study, several characteristics are described in the following table:

Table 2 Frequency Distribution of Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1. Age		
< 20 years	0	0
21-35 years old	20	66.7
>36	10	33.3
Total	30	100%
2. Education		
Elementary	0	0
Junior High School	9	30
High School	16	55.3
PT	5	16.7
Total	30	100%
3. Occupation		
SELF-EMPLOYED	7	23.3
Civil Servant	1	3.3
LABOR	8	26.7
PRIVATE EMPLOYEE	3	10
Housewife	11	36.7
Total	30	100

Based on the table above, the characteristics based on age show that 20 respondents (66.7%) were aged 21-35 years and 10 respondents (33.3%) were aged ≥36 years. The characteristics based on education show that most respondents were high school graduates, namely 16 people (55.3%), 9 respondents (30%) had a junior high school education, and 5 respondents (16.7%) had a college education. Based on occupation, most mothers did not work or were housewives, totaling 11 people (36.7%), 8 people (26.7%) were laborers, 7 people (23.3%) were entrepreneurs, 3 people (10%) were private employees, and 1 person (3.3%) was a civil servant.

DISCUSSION

Mothers' Knowledge of Diarrhea in Toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025

Based on the results of the study conducted by the researcher as presented in Table 5.1, the knowledge of mothers about diarrhea in toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025, obtained from 30 respondents, shows that there are still many mothers who have sufficient knowledge, namely 12 people (40%), good knowledge, namely 11 respondents (36.7%), and 7 respondents (26.7%) in the insufficient category.

The results of this study are also in line with the results of a study conducted by Harti Astuti & Nurtias Eka Anggraeni, 2022 entitled "Mothers' Knowledge of Diarrhea in Toddlers in Gambiran Village, RT 35, RW 09, Umbulharjo V, Yogyakarta," which found that the majority of mothers had sufficient knowledge (14 or 43.75%), insufficient knowledge (11 or 34.38%), and 7 (21.87%) respondents had good knowledge. The results of this study are in contrast to the research conducted by (Indra Hizkia P & Christin Sitingjak, 2022) entitled "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers in Sibarani Nasampulu Village, Laguboti District, in 2022." In the study conducted on 46 respondents, the majority of mothers had good knowledge, namely 39 people (84.8%), sufficient knowledge in 5 people (10.9%), and insufficient knowledge in 2 people (4.3%).

Based on research conducted by (Silaen et al., 2022) entitled "Mothers' Knowledge Level About Diarrhea in Toddlers at the Ridos Clinic in 2021," the results showed that out of 20 respondents, the majority had good knowledge, namely 13 people (65%), sufficient knowledge, namely 5 people (25%), and 2 respondents (10%) had poor knowledge. Silaen et al., 2022 stated that some respondents who had good knowledge were influenced by education.

Knowledge is an understanding or information about a subject that you obtain through experience or study, which is known either by one person or by people in general. (Swarjana, 2022)

Therefore, the researchers assumed that mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers plays an important role in determining preventive behaviors and the handling of diarrhea in toddlers. In this study, mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers was sufficient. According to the researchers, mothers' knowledge was influenced by their occupation because most of the respondents were housewives. Housewives are indeed directly involved in caring for their children at home, but they still lack understanding about the causes, symptoms, and ways to treat diarrhea due to the lack of information they receive about diarrhea in toddlers. Therefore, to obtain good results, housewives also need to seek the latest information about diarrhea in toddlers to increase their knowledge.

Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea Based on Age, Education, and Occupation Characteristics in Toddlers at the Helen Tarigan Clinic in 2025

Based on the characteristics of the respondents, there are three characteristics in this study, namely age, education, and occupation.

1. Age

In this study, the characteristics based on age were that 20 respondents (66.7%) were aged 20-35 years, and 10 respondents (33.3%) were aged ≥ 36 years.

Age is the length of time lived since birth. The older a person is, the wiser they become, the more information they encounter, and the more things they do. Thus, a person's responsiveness and mindset continue to develop. (Hendrawan, 2023)

This study is also in line with research conducted by (Fitri, 2018) entitled "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers in the Working Area of the Pamulang Community Health Center, South Tangerang City," which found that the majority of respondents were aged 20-35 years, totaling 59 people (55.1%), aged ≥ 36 years, totaling 45 people (42.1%), and 3 respondents (2.8%) aged ≤ 20 years. According to the study, mothers' knowledge about diarrhea was influenced by other factors, such as their limited experience in managing the disease, which might be because the infants were cared for by their grandmothers or caregivers rather than their own mothers.

According to the study (Kharisma et al., 2023) Age affects a person's comprehension and mindset. The older a person is, the more mature and capable they are in thinking and working. As a person ages, their comprehension and mindset will also develop, so that the knowledge they acquire will improve.

According to research conducted by (Silaen et al., 2022) entitled "Mothers' Knowledge Level About Diarrhea in Toddlers at the Ridos Clinic in 2021," based on age, most were 20-35 years old, totaling

18 people (90%), and 2 people (2%) were ≥ 36 years old. Age affects a person's knowledge in terms of mindset and comprehension.

This study is in line with research conducted by (Rosawita et al., 2024) entitled "Mothers' knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers at the Kurulu Community Health Center in Jayawijaya Regency," which was obtained from 55 respondents, the majority of whom were mothers aged 20-35 years (32 people or 58.2%), ≥ 36 years old, 17 people (30.9%), ≤ 20 years old, 6 people (10.9%). The researchers assumed that although maturity does not always guarantee increased knowledge, the age of mothers can influence their experience, emotional maturity, and ability to access and use health information to support their children's health.

According to the researchers' assumption, older age does not guarantee an increase in a person's knowledge. This is supported by the results obtained in the field, which show that there are still mothers who are older but whose knowledge and understanding of diarrhea in toddlers is still lacking. This is due to limited access to information. Older individuals tend to apply the knowledge they have gained from previous experiences and from stories they have heard from their parents. Meanwhile, younger individuals have easier access to more modern information through technology and current issues. Therefore, age is not a determining factor in a person's level of knowledge.

1. Education

In terms of educational background, the results show that most of the mothers had a high school education, namely 16 people (55.3%), 9 people (30%) had a junior high school education, and 5 people (16.7%) had a college education.

Education is the entire process of a person's life, such as the interaction between individuals and their environment, both formally and informally. Education influences a person's learning process. The more educated a person is, the more understanding or sensitive they are to information. With a higher education, a person is expected to have broader knowledge as well.

The results of this study are in line with those researched by (Apriani et al., 2022) entitled "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers in Baler Bale Agung Village, Jembrana Regency, in 2021," which found that the highest percentage of respondents were high school graduates, namely 26 people (86.7%), followed by 3 junior high school graduates (10%), elementary school 1 person (3.3%). Apriani stated that education is one of the factors that influence the level of knowledge and plays an important role. The higher a person's level of education, the higher their insight and level of knowledge.

According to research conducted by (Winova & Budiarmo, 2023) entitled "Description of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers in Cincau Village, Bekasi Regency," the most common level of education among the 113 respondents was high school/vocational high school, with 68 people (60.2%), junior high school 31 people (27.4%), elementary school 9 people (8.0%), and university 5 people (4.4%). The higher a person's education level, the broader their knowledge.

This study is inversely proportional to the research conducted by (Sianipar, 2021) entitled Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers at the Sangkunur Community Health Center. The results of the study found that of the 33 respondents, the highest percentage was mothers with elementary school education, totaling 14 people (42.2%). Sianipar, 2021, argues that education is important and that everyone should receive a proper education. This is because the higher a person's education, the broader their knowledge and understanding. The broader their knowledge, the better they will be at living a healthy life, especially for mothers who take care of their families.

According to the researcher's assumption, education has a significant impact on a person's knowledge. The higher the education, the more knowledge they will have. Through education, a person can obtain more information and understand the material better.

2. Occupation

Based on the characteristics of the jobs, the results of this study show that of all respondents, the majority of mothers' jobs were housewives (11 people or 36.7%), entrepreneurs (7 or 23.3%), laborers (8 or 26.7%), private employees (3 or 10%), and civil servants (1 or 3.3%).

Work is an activity that requires time and energy to complete each type of job that is considered important and requires attention. Busy people only have a little time to obtain information. (Hendrawan, 2023)

The results of this study are in line with those researched by (Apriani et al., 2022), entitled "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge About Diarrhea in Toddlers in Baler Bale Agung Village, Jembrana

Regency, in 2021," which shows that the occupational characteristics of the total number of respondents, 30 people, indicate that the majority of mothers' occupations are housewives (IRT), namely 22 (73.3%), 5 (16.7%) were entrepreneurs, and 3 (10%) were private employees. With mothers' jobs being only as housewives, mothers have more time with their toddlers, so that when there are toddler health center activities, mothers will find it easier to monitor their children's development and obtain health information from health workers. Frequent access to health information will increase mothers' insight and knowledge about infant health.

According to research conducted by (Diva A & Akas, 2024) entitled "Overview of Mothers' Knowledge of Diarrhea in Toddlers in the Kalijudan Surabaya Health Center Area in 2024," the results from all 90 respondents showed that the majority of respondents were housewives, namely 35 (38.9%), 20 (22.1%) were traders, 19 (21.1%) were private employees, and 8 (8.9%) were laborers. Increased educational opportunities for women also open up the possibility of working outside the home. Some women who work outside the home strive to increase their family income so that their young children can use more sophisticated media. Women who work outside the home also receive more information from the people around them than women who only focus on their families.

In this study, the researcher assumes that housewives still have the opportunity to increase their knowledge, especially about diarrhea in toddlers. Housewives can use various media such as mobile phones, reading newspapers about health issues, or visiting health workers as a means to increase and improve their insight or knowledge related to diarrhea in toddlers.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study at the Helen Tarigan Clinic, it was found that most mothers had sufficient knowledge about diarrhea in toddlers. Of the 30 respondents, 40% were in the sufficient knowledge category, while 36.7% had good knowledge and 26.7% had insufficient knowledge. These findings indicate that although some mothers have adequate understanding, there is still a large group that needs additional education to improve their readiness in preventing and treating diarrhea. The characteristics of the respondents show that the majority are aged 21-35 years, have a high school education, and are housewives. This indicates that although housewives have more time to care for their children, they may face obstacles in accessing relevant health information. Therefore, this study emphasizes the need for more structured and sustainable educational interventions in health facilities, such as the Helen Tarigan Clinic, to improve mothers' health knowledge and practices.

Although this study successfully provides a clear picture of mothers' knowledge, there are several limitations that need to be considered. The quantitative descriptive research design does not allow for analysis of the causal relationship between respondent characteristics (age, education, occupation) and knowledge levels. In addition, *purposive sampling* of 30 respondents limited to one clinic may not fully represent the population of mothers of young children in a wider area. For future research, it is recommended to use an analytical design, such as an analytical survey or cohort, to identify factors that significantly influence mothers' knowledge about diarrhea. Furthermore, future research could expand the scope of the sample, both in terms of number and location (e.g., involving several clinics or health centers), to obtain more generalizable results. It is also important to explore the most effective education methods, such as the use of digital media, interactive counseling, or practical demonstrations, which can be tailored to the background and demographic characteristics of mothers.

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