
The Impact Of Stunting Prevention Counseling Through Education On The Importance Of The First 1,000 Days Of Life

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Abstract

Stunting remains a public health issue in Indonesia, including Tanjung Gunung Village, Central Bangka Regency. Limited maternal knowledge of nutrition during the first 1,000 days of life (1,000 HPK), suboptimal breastfeeding practices, and cultural food taboos contribute to stunting risk. This community service aims to improve nutritional knowledge among high-risk pregnant women (4T) as a stunting prevention effort. A descriptive design with a participatory educational approach was applied through interactive counseling and discussion. The activity involved 25 high-risk pregnant women using leaflets and audiovisual media. Evaluation was conducted descriptively through observation of participation and responses. The results showed good acceptance of the material and high participant engagement. Community-based 1,000 HPK nutrition education is feasible as a promotive and preventive strategy for stunting prevention.

Keywords: *Stunting, First 1,000 Days of Life, Nutrition Education, High-Risk Pregnant Women.*

INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a chronic nutritional problem that remains a challenge in Indonesia and globally. This condition is characterized by children's height below the standard for their age due to long-term malnutrition, repeated infections, and suboptimal parenting (Hamdin et al., 2026). Globally, the prevalence of stunting is estimated to decline from 26.4% in 2012 to 23.2% in 2024. However, this achievement is still far from the target of a 40% reduction. Therefore, the WHO extended the stunting reduction target to 2030 (Assembly & States, 2025).

In Indonesia, the prevalence of stunting decreased from 24.4% in 2021 to 21.6% in 2022 and remained relatively stagnant in 2023, before declining again to 19.8% in 2024. Despite showing improvement, this figure still falls short of the 2025 national target (Ministry of Health, 2025). A downward trend was also observed in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province, although fluctuations in stunting cases were still observed in certain regions, such as Tanjung Gunung Village.

In addition to healthcare services, cultural factors also influence the risk of stunting, particularly restrictions on animal protein consumption among pregnant women, which impact nutritional adequacy during pregnancy. Poor understanding of the importance of the First 1,000 Days of Life and exclusive breastfeeding further increases the risk of stunted growth in children. Therefore, community-based nutrition education, particularly for pregnant women at risk of developing the 4Ts, is a crucial strategy for sustainable stunting prevention.

RESEARCH METHODS

This community service activity was implemented with a quasi-experimental design without a control group through a participatory educational approach. The intervention was provided in the form of interactive counseling accompanied by two-way discussions between facilitators and participants. The activity was carried out in Tanjung Gunung Village, Pangkalan Baru District, Central Bangka Regency, which is one of the stunting locus areas based on BNBA data from February 2025. The implementation of the activity was supported by the use of educational media in the form of leaflets, LCD projector banners, projection screens, microphones, and speakers to support the delivery of material to be clearer and easier to understand. This activity involved village midwives and Posyandu

cadres as implementing partners in order to support the smooth and successful implementation of the program.

The population of this activity was all pregnant women within the working area of the Tanjung Gunung Village Integrated Health Post (Posyandu), with a sample size of 25 pregnant women determined using a total sampling technique. The target group was pregnant women with the 4T risks: too young, too old, too closely spaced, and too many births. Data collection was conducted through observation and filling out a simple instrument before and after the counseling session to assess changes in participants' understanding. The data obtained were analyzed descriptively and then presented in narrative and tabular form to provide a systematic overview of the results of the activity implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation of the implementation of community service activities was conducted through a question and answer session and discussion after the presentation of the counseling materials. Based on the evaluation results, the majority of pregnant women participating in the activities demonstrated the ability to re-explain the material that had been presented, particularly regarding the definition of stunting, risk factors for stunting during pregnancy, and the importance of fulfilling nutritional needs and monitoring the health of pregnant women as an effort to prevent stunting from an early age. Furthermore, participants were also able to identify behaviors and conditions that potentially increase the risk of stunting, as reflected in the answers and responses provided during the discussion session.

Throughout the activity, participant participation was quite good, demonstrated by active engagement in the question-and-answer session, both in the form of questions and sharing opinions and personal experiences related to pregnancy. The interaction between participants and facilitators demonstrated that the counseling material was well-received and relevant to the participants' needs. The results of this evaluation illustrate that the interactive counseling activity was able to improve pregnant women's understanding of stunting issues, although the assessment was conducted descriptively without using quantitative measurements before and after the intervention. The results of the subsequent activity are presented in narrative form, supported by activity documentation.

The results of this community service activity demonstrated that outreach using a participatory educational approach accompanied by interactive discussions was an effective method for improving pregnant women's understanding of stunting prevention. Evaluation through a question-and-answer session after the outreach allowed the facilitator to gain insight into participants' understanding of the material presented and identify topics requiring further explanation.



Figure 1. Participants and Activity Implementers



Figure 2. Answering Questions from Participants

CONCLUSION

The interactive approach used in this community service activity demonstrated that the learning process could be more active and contextual, despite the descriptive evaluation. The interactions established during the activity demonstrated that the counseling method used helped participants understand the material presented in a way that was tailored to their needs and circumstances. This demonstrates the potential of interactive counseling to improve pregnant women's understanding of stunting prevention.

Based on these results, similar educational activities are recommended to be implemented sustainably and integrated with maternal and child health service programs at the integrated health posts (Posyandu) and community health centers (Puskesmas). This integration is expected to strengthen promotive and preventive efforts and support accelerated stunting reduction, particularly among high-risk pregnant women.

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