

The Effect Of Nutrition Counseling On Mother's Knowledge About Stunting During The Pandemic Period In Balige District

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. During this covid-19 pandemic, mothers are more focused on preventing the virus, so knowledge about the nutritional needs of toddlers is neglected. Lack of knowledge of maternal nutrition is one of the causes of malnutrition in families, especially toddlers. With nutritional counseling given to mothers at this time, it is hoped that they will be able to improve the nutrition of children under five in the family. **Method.** This research is a quasi-experimental study with a one-group pre-test-posttest design, with purposive sampling as the sampling technique. The number of respondents is 27 people, with inclusion criteria. The measurement instrument used is a questionnaire, followed by counseling with powerpoint media, videos and leaflets. The analysis used paired sample t-test to describe the characteristics of the respondents. **Results.** The results showed that the average (mean) knowledge of mothers about nutrition at the time of the pretest was 71.42 and at the time of the posttest increased to 79.64. The lowest knowledge score at the pretest was 30 and the highest score was 90 and at the posttest the lowest knowledge score was 20 and the highest score was 100. **Conclusion.** The statistical test results obtained p value = 0.08 ($p < 0.05$) indicating that there is a difference, so it can be concluded that there is an effect of nutritional counseling on the level of knowledge of mothers who have stunting toddlers in Balige District. It is recommended to the local government, especially the village government, to provide facilities and infrastructure and to conduct regular counseling about the impact of stunting to the community to increase the consumption of balanced nutritious food, especially during a pandemic.

Keywords: *Counseling, Mother's Knowledge, Pandemic Period, Stunting*

INTRODUCTION

One of the indicators to determine the nutritional status of children is nutritional status. Good nutritional status helps the process of optimal growth and development of children. Indonesia has multiple nutritional problems in children under five, namely the problem of undernutrition and overnutrition. One of the problems of undernutrition that is happening in Indonesia is stunting. The government has tried to solve the nutritional problem by promoting various programs. However, the program that has been carried out by the government has not been effective in overcoming these nutritional problems, one of the reasons is the lack of knowledge of mothers about healthy eating patterns and the nutrients that children must meet during their growth period. The stunting rate in Toba Regency itself is still worrying. Based on the results of monitoring the nutritional status (PSG) in North Sumatra, it was found that the prevalence of stunting in Toba Regency was 36.2 percent, with details of 14.9 percent in the very short category, 21.3 percent in the short category. (Health Profile, Health Office of Sumatra Province 2017). The survey conducted in December 2020 obtained stunting data for 1047 children, an increase compared to the data obtained during the initial survey in August 2019 which was 958 children with TB/U measurements in 16 sub-districts.

The highest number of stunting toddlers is in Pintu Pohan Meranti District, which is 108 children. The work of parents, especially mothers, the majority have jobs as farmers and farm laborers. The amount of family income is also uncertain every month depending on what will be harvested, so it requires every family member to work in order to increase family income.

Mother's education level can determine whether or not a mother easily absorbs and understands the nutritional knowledge obtained. Education is needed by mothers so that mothers are more responsive to nutritional problems in the family, especially in toddlers and are expected to take appropriate action as soon as possible. The provision of appropriate food ingredients and menus for toddlers in an effort to improve nutritional status will be realized if the mother has a good level of nutritional knowledge.

Based on the description above, researchers are interested in conducting research on the effect of nutrition counseling on mother's knowledge about stunting in toddlers in Balige District, Toba Regency.

METHOD

This research is a quasi-experimental research with one-group Pretets-Posttest Design. Where the sampling technique is purposive sampling with inclusion criteria the respondents are local residents, have lived for more than 5 years and are over 17 years old.

Data were collected using a questionnaire which was first tested for validity and reliability with the same criteria as the research respondents. The validity test was carried out using the Spearman moment and the reliability test using the Cronbach alpha technique. The research locations were in 8 villages in the Balige sub-district, namely Janji Maria Village, Balige III Village, Lumban Pea Timur Village, Bonan Dolok Village, Sibuntuon Village, Hutagaol Sosor Dolok Village, Hutabulu Mejan Village, and Lumban Gaol Village, where 27 respondents were involved, namely mothers who have stunting toddlers.

In the first stage, respondents filled out questionnaires related to nutrition, especially stunting, before being given intervention or counseling. In the second stage, after that, counseling was given to mothers related to nutrition, especially nutrition for stunting toddlers. Where counseling is carried out only one meeting with lecture and discussion methods and by distributing supporting media such as leaflets. The analysis uses a paired sample T-test and descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of the respondents.

RESULTS

The results of research on nutrition counseling to mothers with stunting have increased knowledge and understanding related to nutrition, especially nutrition for stunting toddlers. The increase can be seen from the pretest and posttest scores in 8 villages in Balige District, Toba Regency, the results are as follows:

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Knowledge Level Scores About Nutrition at Pretest and Posttest on Mothers Who Have Stunting Toddlers in Balige District

Level of	Minimal	Maximal	Mean
Adjustment	Score	Score	

Pretest	30	90	71,42
PostTest	20	100	79,64

Source : Primer Data (2022)

The table above shows that the average (mean) knowledge of mothers about nutrition at the pretest was 71.42 and at the posttest increased to 79.64. The lowest knowledge score at the pretest was 30 and the highest score was 90 and at the posttest the lowest knowledge score was 20 and the highest score was 100.

Table 2. The Effect of Nutrition Counseling on Knowledge of Mothers Who Have Stunting Toddlers in Balige District

<i>Level of</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Adjustment</i>			
Pretest	27	71,42	0,08
PostTest	27	79,64	0,08

Source : Primer Data (2022)

Table 2 shows that there was an increase in the average score (mean) of respondents' knowledge about nutrition from the pretest to the posttest after being given counseling. The results of statistical tests obtained p value = 0.08 ($p < 0.05$) indicating that there is a difference, so it can be concluded that there is an effect of nutrition counseling on the level of knowledge of mothers who have stunting toddlers in Balige District.

DISCUSSION

Statistical test results obtained p value = 0.08 ($p < 0.05$) so it can be concluded that there is an effect of nutrition counseling on the level of knowledge of mothers who have stunting toddlers in Balige District. There was an increase in the average score (mean) of respondents' knowledge of 8.22 after being given counseling about PHBS.

The results of this study are supported by several similar studies in different places. The results of the research of Ramadhan, et al (2021) stated that the evaluation results through filling out the pre-post test questionnaire showed that there was an increase in the knowledge of mothers. The average knowledge before counseling was 66 and the average after counseling was 77.

The results of the research by Sari, et al (2019) that there is a significant effect of nutritional counseling on mother's knowledge about the eating patterns of toddlers in Sambirejo Village, Mantingan District, Ngawi Regency (p value = 0.001). Alifah (2019) also obtained the same results, namely there was an effect of nutritional counseling ($p=0.001$) on feeding practices for toddlers, there was an effect of counseling on diversity ($p=0.007$), energy adequacy ($p=0.001$), protein adequacy ($p= 0.016$) toddlers. there was no effect of nutrition education on the frequency of feeding to toddlers ($p=0.285$).

Rini (2016) also conducted the same study, obtaining results after the Wilcoxon test was obtained $p = 0.004 < \alpha 0.05$, this proves that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected, meaning that there is a positive effect of providing counseling on the level of knowledge about providing balanced nutrition to toddlers on the level of knowledge of mothers in Jampit Hamlet.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the research that has been done, there is a significant difference between the score before counseling and the score after counseling, so it can be concluded that there is an effect of nutritional counseling on the knowledge of mothers who have stunting toddlers in Balige District with a value of $p = 0.08$ ($p < 0.05$). Stunting that occurs in toddlers is the influence of one of them being the mother's low nutritional knowledge about balanced nutritious food. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for the government to increase knowledge of maternal nutrition, especially mothers who have stunted toddlers, to reduce stunting rates in Toba Regency.

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