



Towards a Healthy Generation Through Stunting Counseling for a Bright Future

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Abstract. A complex and serious public health problem, stunting is more common in children who are malnourished during their growing years. The main causes include a lack of consumption of nutrient-dense foods, an unclean environment, and a lack of knowledge about the importance of optimal nutrition. According to health reports, the percentage of stunted population in Kendal District increased from 17.5% in 2022 to 22.4% in 2023. In addition to impacting long-term health, productivity, and cognitive function, stunting also affects physical growth. To address this issue, a cross-sectoral strategy is needed that includes improved health services, community education, and provision of high-nutrient supplementary foods. On this occasion, two midwives served as presenters in a socialization session aimed at raising the awareness of mothers about stunting and the importance of nutrition in Cepokomulyo village.

Keywords: Socialization, Stunting, Nutrition, Children.

Abstrak. Sebagai masalah kesehatan masyarakat yang kompleks dan serius, stunting lebih sering terjadi pada anak-anak yang mengalami kekurangan gizi selama masa pertumbuhan. Penyebab utamanya antara lain kurangnya konsumsi makanan padat gizi, lingkungan yang tidak bersih, dan kurangnya pengetahuan tentang pentingnya gizi yang optimal. Menurut laporan kesehatan, persentase populasi stunting di Kabupaten Kendal meningkat dari 17,5% pada tahun 2022 menjadi 22,4% pada tahun 2023. Selain berdampak pada kesehatan jangka panjang, produktivitas, dan fungsi kognitif, stunting juga mempengaruhi pertumbuhan fisik. Untuk mengatasi masalah ini, diperlukan strategi lintas sektoral yang mencakup peningkatan layanan kesehatan, edukasi masyarakat, dan pemberian makanan tambahan bergizi tinggi. Pada kesempatan ini, dua orang bidan menjadi pemateri dalam sesi sosialisasi yang bertujuan untuk meningkatkan kesadaran para ibu mengenai stunting dan pentingnya gizi di Desa Cepokomulyo.

Kata kunci: Sosialisasi, Stunting, Gizi, Anak.

1. BACKGROUND

One of the most significant and complex public health problems is stunting. The disease is closely linked to children not getting enough nutrition, especially during the growing years. Stunting is largely caused by a lack of a balanced diet, limited availability of nutrient-dense foods, and a lack of public awareness of healthy eating practices. In addition, the risk of stunting in children also increases due to several factors, such as unhygienic environmental conditions, family economic deprivation, chronic infections and diseases, and poor parenting practices.

According to information from the Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) conducted in 2022, Kendal District has a stunting prevalence of 17.5%. However, according to the Indonesian Health Survey (SKDI) statistics in 2023, the prevalence of stunting increased to 22.4%, an increase of 4.9%. In addition to being a physical growth problem, stunting has long-term impacts on adult productivity, cognitive function, and the likelihood

of developing chronic diseases. Therefore, comprehensive initiatives across various sectors are needed, from improving accessibility of health and nutrition services, raising public awareness and educating the public on child health and nutrition, to improving environmental frameworks that support normal growth and development. To successfully and sustainably address the problem of stunting, synergistic cooperation is needed, so cross-sectoral strategies and active community participation are very important.

This seminar or socialization activity aims to educate mothers with their toddlers regarding information about stunting and its prevention, as well as providing nutritious food for toddlers at the residence of the head of Cepokomulyo Village, Gemuh District, Kendal Regency.

2. METHODS

This socialization activity on stunting was held on July 29, 2024, two midwives were presented as presenters to make this event a success. This research method is descriptive qualitative. Mothers and their toddlers who were stunted attended the meeting held at the Cepokomulyo Village Head's house. Data was collected in several ways: by taking pictures and recording the speaker's presentation on stunting, its prevention, and its impact. In addition, the speaker opened a discussion session by asking what complaints the mothers experienced in caring for their stunted children. Finally, they provided healthy and nutritious food to stunted toddlers. Descriptive analysis was conducted on data collected from observations, interviews, and documentation to determine mothers' knowledge about stunting, the efficiency of information delivery by midwives, and the direct benefits of providing healthy food to stunted toddlers.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education on Stunting

This socialization activity aims to provide knowledge, benefits and education to the community about the importance of preventing stunting in children. In this activity, the presentation of material about stunting was delivered by Mrs. Rusminah and Mrs. Etyk who work as midwives in Cepokomulyo village. The speakers conveyed information about stunting and its prevention and answered complaints experienced by mothers in caring for their toddlers who were affected by stunting. In addition, the importance of adequate nutrition during pregnancy is one that needs to be done by prospective mothers.

On this occasion, it was also explained that pregnant women who have knowledge about nutrition and health will be more aware and care about the fetus they are carrying. Conversely, ignorance about improper health is an obstacle to getting better nutrition. In general, few individuals realize the importance of nutrition during pregnancy and the first two years of life for future development. Since the First 1000 Days of Life (HPK), various efforts must be made to prevent stunting, starting from the mother's pregnancy. One of the efforts made is to increase maternal awareness about attitudes and behaviors that contribute to the prevention of stunting. Nutrition packages that provide supplementary food, vitamin A, and blood supplement tablets are necessary to improve mothers' knowledge and attitudes towards health and nutrition. It also helps mothers understand how to properly care for their children. For this reason, prevention of stunting starting from the mother's pregnancy is very important in order to reduce the prevalence of stunting.

Supplementary Food Provision

The last series of events is the provision of additional food to toddlers in the form of nutritious food with the aim that mothers are educated about the scope of nutrition that is food for their toddlers. Supplementary Feeding (PMT) for toddlers is the provision of nutritional supplementation that aims to complement nutritional needs (every 100 grams of PMT: 450 calories, 71 grams of carbohydrates, 14 grams of fat, 9 grams of protein) so that body weight and height are appropriate for their age (Bureau of Communication and Community Services of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2016). The purpose of supplementary feeding for stunted toddlers is to fulfill their nutritional needs, which are not met by regular food. This is very important to promote healthy growth and development. These supplementary foods usually contain high levels of protein, iron, zinc, and vitamin A. This is important for bone health, brain development and the immune system.

Monitoring toddler growth along with supplementary feeding programs is done to provide optimal benefits to ensure nutrients are absorbed by stunted toddlers. In addition, this program is usually supported by education to parents or caregivers on the importance of providing a nutritious and balanced diet, as well as strategies to overcome nutritional problems in children. To prevent infections that can worsen stunting, this education also includes information on hygiene and cleanliness. It is believed that by using these strategies, stunted children will be able to catch up with their growth and experience improved health.

4. CONCLUSION

A comprehensive strategy is needed to prevent stunting, including educating the community, providing healthy food, and improving the community's understanding of the need for good nutrition from early pregnancy. The socialization program in Cepokomulyo village has shown that mothers' nutritional knowledge and habits can be improved through education and provision of supplementary food for stunted toddlers. It is hoped that this program can reduce the occurrence of stunting and improve children's growth and well-being. To effectively and sustainably prevent stunting, collaboration between various sectors and community involvement are essential.

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