


Community Empowerment in Preventing Stunting in Children in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency

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| Article Info | ABSTRACT |
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| Keywords: Stunting Child Nutrition | Community empowerment in preventing stunting must involve various parties, including local governments, health workers, community leaders, and families. This can be done by increasing access to quality health, nutrition, and sanitation services in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency. Health workers also have an important role in community empowerment. They can provide education and training to the community about the importance of balanced nutrition, introduction to complementary feeding, and the importance of a healthy diet. In addition, they can also monitor and evaluate the nutritional status of children in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency. Based on the results of a survey conducted on December 19, 2024 in Boang Manalu Village, Families need to be aware of the importance of preventing stunting and adopting a healthy and nutritious diet for their children. In addition, they need to access and health services related to stunting prevention, such as immunization, exclusive breastfeeding, and complementary feeding. By making community empowerment efforts in preventing stunting in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency, it is hoped that it can reduce the prevalence of stunting in the area. This has a positive impact on the growth and development of children in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency, as well as improving their quality of life and future. |
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INTRODUCTION

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2024, Indonesia was included in the third country with the highest prevalence in the Southeast Asia Region (AR & Hardiansyah, 2022; Rachmawati et al., 2024). The prevalence of stunting in Indonesia has become a serious concern in recent years. According to data from the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the National Health Survey (Riskesdas), the rate of stunting in Indonesia varies by region, with higher rates in rural areas compared to urban areas (Alkaff et al., 2022; Zainuddin et al., 2021).

This prevalence can fluctuate from one year to the next, but the figures provide an indication that stunting is a significant health problem in Indonesia (Hardiansyah et al., 2021; Jamilah et al., 2023).

Some sources also note that stunting rates may be higher in certain regions of Indonesia. The Indonesian government has committed to addressing stunting and has launched various programs and initiatives to improve child nutrition, access to quality health care, and nutrition education for the community. These efforts include the Healthy Indonesia Program with a Family Approach (PIS-PK), which is designed to reduce stunting rates in Indonesia (Aini et al., 2023).

Stunting can be caused by various factors, which can be grouped into primary factors and indirect influencing factors (Hidayah & Hidayah, 2022). Primary factors include poor maternal nutritional conditions, premature pregnancy, suboptimal feeding, not providing exclusive breastfeeding, and risk of infection (Indriyanti & Ahwan, 2021). Meanwhile, indirect influencing factors include access to health services, education level, socio-cultural aspects, and environmental sanitation conditions (WHO, 2020).

Based on research conducted by Verawati Simamora in 2023, there are a number of factors that contribute to the emergence of stunting in children. Direct causes of stunting include inadequate nutritional intake and the presence of disease infections (Indriyanti & Ahwan, 2021).

Indirect factors that play a role include education level, family economic situation, maternal nutritional status during pregnancy, water and environmental sanitation conditions, and low birth weight (LBW), as well as knowledge possessed by the mother and family (Hardiansyah & Wahdian, 2023). Stunting is a very worrying global problem, especially in developing countries. The term "stunting" refers to a condition where children experience serious disorders in physical growth and development due to chronic lack of nutritional intake, especially in the early stages of their development (Pernantah et al., 2022).

This problem is not only health-related, but also has significant social and economic impacts. Stunting can occur in children under the age of five, which is an important phase in their physical and mental development (Agustino & Widodo, 2022). The consequences of stunting are enormous, not only limited to physical growth retardation, but also affect cognitive abilities, learning potential, and future productivity. Children who experience stunting have a higher risk of developing chronic diseases and experience reduced life expectancy (Saufi, 2021). The main cause of stunting involves nutritional problems, especially chronic malnutrition caused by insufficient or unbalanced food intake (Nugraheni & Malik, 2023).

Other contributing factors include poor sanitation, limited access to clean water, and inappropriate feeding and child care practices (Agustino & Widodo, 2022). Stunting also has long-term impacts on a country's economic growth and development, as stunted generations tend to have lower productivity as adults. Stunting has serious long-term impacts on children's health and development, including physical and mental health problems, reduced quality of life, and limited cognitive abilities and productivity in adulthood (Nugraheni & Malik, 2023). Efforts to prevent stunting through improved nutrition, sanitation, education, and awareness are essential to improving the quality of life

for children worldwide. Many international organizations and governments of developing countries are working together to address the problem of stunting and improve children's welfare (Simanjuntak et al., 2022).

METHODS

This community empowerment counseling activity was carried out together with students of the Health Administration Bachelor's Program at Darmo Health College and parents/mothers in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency. The community consisted of 30 people. Based on the results of a survey conducted on December 19, 2024 in Boang Manalu Village. The method used was to provide health counseling on "Preventing Stunting in Children in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency" to parents/families of stunted children in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a survey conducted on December 19, 2024 in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency and obtained results from the community that in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency, many people do not understand about preventing stunting, stunting problems in children and the role of parents in the problem of stunting in their children, they also do not understand the importance of maintaining good and proper nutrition. With this problem, students of the Health Administration Bachelor's Program at Darmo Health College provide health education on preventing stunting in children. Community outreach activities by providing health education on preventing stunting in children, parental knowledge of stunting in children, stunting problems in children, the role of parents in stunting problems in children and how to choose healthy and nutritious foods were carried out on Thursday, December 19, 2024 in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency. The number of people who participated in the community health outreach activities was 30 people.



Figure 1. Counseling Committee and Participants Image Source: Personal Photo



Figure 2. Counseling Committee and Participants Image Source: Personal Photo

CONCLUSION

From the results of the study conducted in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency, the priority problems were obtained, namely the lack of parental knowledge about stunting in children, the problem of stunting in children, and the role of parents in the problem of stunting in children. With these problems, the group provided health education to parents in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency with material on how to choose nutritious and good food for children. After being given health education, the community in Boang Manalu Village, Pakpak Bharat Regency, will be aware of the importance of knowing the problem of stunting and the role of parents in the problem of stunting in children.

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