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Education to Improve Parents' Knowledge About Stunting

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Abstract

Early childhood is a golden phase- a crucial human growth and development period. Growth deficiencies in infants can affect their physical resilience and intelligence, which may impact their future lives. To address the issue of stunting, the Indonesian government has developed a national strategy for accelerated reduction of stunting that involves various sectors, such as the government, private sector, community, philanthropy, mass media, and academics. The government itself then coordinates this strategy. Cross-sector collaboration is essential to addressing stunting, as it is not solely a health issue. Sustainable education is one way to prevent stunting. One of the prioritized approaches to addressing stunting is by focusing on promotional and preventive methods, encouraging all segments of society to participate and support these efforts. This strategy includes health promotion through education and outreach via media. This community service activity aims to enhance parents' knowledge and understanding of stunting, thereby protecting children from the risk of stunting. The community service method uses the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) approach to educate about stunting. It aims to empower the community by utilizing existing potential and resources at SDN 1 Pulau Gemantung Ilir, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency. This activity was carried out in October 2023. The results indicated that parents were enthusiastic about participating in the community service activity, as indicated by the number of participants asking questions related to stunting. In conclusion, the high enthusiasm of parents indicates a continued need for socialization and an increase in knowledge among parents regarding stunting so that the community becomes more aware and understands the characteristics of stunting and its impact on children..

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INTRODUCTION

Toddlerhood, or the golden age, is an important human growth and development period. Failure to thrive in toddlers can impact physical endurance and intelligence, affecting later life (Wulandini et al., 2020). This Golden Age is found during conception, from when humans are still fetuses in their mother's womb until the first few years of their birth, which is termed early age. In a study of the Golden Age, which means the golden age in this periodization of life, its role is fairly large in determining the quality of humans (Uce, 2017).

Currently, several countries, especially developing countries, are still facing the problem of malnutrition in toddlers. Stunting, a state of malnutrition, prevents toddlers from thriving, particularly during the First 1,000 Days of Life (HPK). As a result, children are shorter than their peers, with a height/height or height/height of less than 2 standard deviations (WHO, 2012). Stunting can cause the risk of child death, interfere with the development of the child's brain, increase the risk of infectious diseases and degenerative diseases, and reduce productivity and economic independence in adulthood (Black et al., 2011; Martin et al., 2011, & Steward et al., 2013). Stunting is a chronic malnutrition problem caused by insufficient nutritional intake over a long period due to inappropriate food intake with nutritional needs. It can occur when the fetus is still in the womb or is new and appears when the child is two years old (Kemenkes RI, 2016).

The Indonesian government has created a national stunting reduction acceleration strategy involving various sectors, such as the government, the private sector, the community, philanthropy, mass media, and academics, to address the problem of stunting. The government directly coordinated this strategy. Cross-sectoral cooperation is necessary because stunting is not just a health problem (Candarmaweni & Rahayu, 2020). Almost 3% of toddlers suffer from stunting or are short, and 1% of toddlers are underweight or too thin, according to a survey conducted by UNICEF in 2018. The rate of stunting or failure to thrive in toddlers in Indonesia is still very high, reaching 30.8%. This rate is higher than the 20% limit set by the World Health Organization (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that between 2015 and 2018, the prevalence of stunting in toddlers in Indonesia averaged 36.4 percent, placing Indonesia as the third highest country in the Southeast Asia/Southeast Asia (SEAR) region. Data released in 2018 by WHO showed that global toddler stunting reached 30.8 percent, or 154.8 million toddlers, and that stunting in Indonesia was among the top five countries in the world.

According to the Basic Health Research RISKESDAS (2018) results, 30.8% of toddlers in Indonesia experienced stunting nationally, of which 19.3% were considered very short and 11.5% were considered very short. Although the prevalence of stunting decreased to 27.67% in 2019, it remains a serious problem in Indonesia.

One way to prevent stunting is to provide continuous education to the community. Efforts are needed to encourage preventive and promotional methods by involving the entire community. Mulyana et al. (2021) said that one of the best ways to overcome stunting is to promote health and support breastfeeding through education and counseling with the media. Strengthening Parenting education is very important to be carried out continuously, with methods and different media to increase parents' knowledge about preventing stunting and appropriate treatment if stunting is indicated. Providing education
This is part of the intervention programmed by the government (Komsiyah et al., 2024).

The prevalence of stunting in 2015 in OKI Regency reached 34.7% of children experiencing stunting, while in 2016 the prevalence of stunting reached 32.9%, in 2017 it reached 22.5% of children experiencing stunting, in 2018 the prevalence of stunting reached 30.8% of children experiencing stunting. In 2019 the prevalence of stunting in Ogan Komering Ilir Regency decreased to 11.08% or as many as 1,247 children experiencing stunting (Bappeda Kabupaten OKI, 2023). Tanjung Lubuk District, one of the districts in OKI Regency, still faces the problem of stunting. The prevalence of children experiencing stunting in 2018 in Tanjung Lubuk District reached 5.38%, consisting of 21 children experiencing stunting out of 390 children in 4 villages that are stunting prevention. In 2019, the prevalence of stunting in Tanjung Lubuk District increased to 15.22%, with 60 children experiencing stunting out of 394 children in 4 villages that were targeted for stunting control.

SDN 1 Pulau Gemantung is one of the elementary schools in Tanjung Lubuk District. The observations at SDN 1 Pulau Gemantung Ilir found that 7 out of 10 parents did not know about stunting, especially regarding the definition, causes, prevention, signs and symptoms, and prevention of stunting. Education about stunting is hoped to provide parents with knowledge about stunting. Based on the background above, it is the basis for carrying out activities to educate parents of SDN 1 Pulau Gemantung Ilir students regarding stunting.

The objectives of this service activity are to increase parents' understanding of stunting and the factors that cause it, educate parents about nutritious eating patterns that suit children's needs, and utilize local potential in the community to develop practical and effective ways of preventing stunting.

METHODS

The community service method used the ABCD (Asset-Based Community Development) approach to educate about stunting and aims to empower the community by utilizing the potential and resources available at SD Negeri 1 Pulau Gemantung Ilir. This method encourages the community to acknowledge their resources, such as knowledge, skills, or facilities, that can enhance their quality of life. In the context of community service, the ABCD method was applied with the following steps:

1. Identify Community Assets: The first stage was to identify assets in the community, especially those related to children's nutrition and health issues. In this case, namely, the existence of parents as people who play a role in taking care of children and educating children directly. In addition, there are also teachers who play a role in providing education at school. Other assets that can be utilized are facilities in schools, such as classrooms for socialization.
2. Community Empowerment. After the assets have been identified, the next stage is community empowerment, which involves students' parents in activities to increase their knowledge about stunting. In this case, socialization activities were carried out with a participatory approach, where parents receive information and are involved in discussions and Q&A about healthy eating patterns, the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, and other stunting prevention measures.
3. Training and Education: To educate parents, training was held involving health experts, namely nutritionists. This training aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the causes and impacts of stunting and how to prevent it.
4. Encouraging Collaboration and Networking, ABCD also encouraged collaboration between community members and various parties, such as schools, health centers, and other community organizations.

By using the ABCD method, parents would understand more about the problem of stunting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This activity was carried out on October 10, 2023, at SDN 1 Pulau Gemantung Ilir, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency. The method used was counseling through lectures with PowerPoint media. The material discussed includes the definition, causes, characteristics, impacts, and prevention of stunting.

1. Recognize and identify existing assets or resources, where assets come from, and individuals or groups of parents of students who want to know about stunting.
2. Next, strengthen community capacity through outreach or education to parents, using lecture and question-and-answer methods, PowerPoint media, and leaflets.
3. Collaborate with the education sector to provide education about nutrition and stunting in schools so that children know the importance of a healthy diet from an early age.

4. Community-based evaluation: In this case, the evaluation is carried out during the activity process; namely, during the process, the presenter asks several questions to the educational participants.

The stunting counseling activity for parents of elementary school students at SDN 1 Pulau Gemantung Ilir, Ogan Komering Ilir Regency, began by asking questions about stunting. Figure 1 shows the opening of the event before providing education.

Figure 1 Opening of the event before providing education

It is seen in Figure 1 that an initial evaluation was carried out before the counseling regarding stunting was carried out, where the parents of the students were asked several questions regarding stunting. In this evaluation, the students' parents' enthusiasm and level of participation were observed. After giving the event's opening, the next step was educating parents about stunting using PowerPoint and leaflet media. This step can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 Providing education to parents regarding stunting using power point and leaflet media

At the education stage, participants were enthusiastic and paid attention to the explanations given by the community service team. At the end of this activity, process evaluations were carried out, as can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Carried out process evaluations

Process evaluations were carried out during the activity to see the consistency of participation from the parents of students from counseling to the end of the educational process. After closing the education, the Community service team took a picture with participants, which can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4 Community service team and community service activity participants

Stunting is a growth disorder caused by poor nutritional and health status during the prenatal and postnatal periods. Disease factors and nutrient intake are direct causes of stunting; both factors are also related to parenting patterns, access to health services, food, and environmental sanitation. However, the basis of the cause of this problem is at the individual and household level itself, such as education level and household income. In addition, family and household factors are classified into maternal factors and home environmental factors. Maternal factors such as lack of nutrition during preconception, pregnancy, and breastfeeding, low maternal height, infection, teenage pregnancy, intrauterine growth restriction (IUGR), mental health, premature birth, close pregnancy spacing, and hypertension. Home environmental factors include lack of child activity and care, inadequate sanitation and water supply, access and lack of food availability, inappropriate household food allocation, and low caregiver education.

According to WHO, stunting is a disruption in the growth and development of children resulting from chronic malnutrition and recurring infections, characterized by the child's length or height being below standard. The condition of a stunted child is that the body

length or height, according to age, is lower than the applicable national standard (Darmawan & Basry, 2022; Kemenkes RI, 2023; Muslimin et al., 2020).

Parents need to know about stunting, develop healthy and clean living habits, correct parenting behavior, and be willing to act to prevent stunting (Hatini et al., 2023). The results of a literature study conducted by Tajdida (2020) and a review of 10 literature review journals show that providing education can influence the mother's level of knowledge in preventing stunting. A good education will increase the mother's knowledge and prevent stunting in children (Tajdida, 2020). Thus, strengthening education is very important to be carried out continuously, with different methods and media to increase parents' knowledge about stunting prevention and appropriate treatment if stunting is indicated. Providing education is part of the government intervention program.

Education about stunting needs to be done because there are still many people who do not understand the causes and impact of stunting on children's growth and development. As a result of interviews with the community, data was obtained that the residents of Hamlet 4, Kesetnana Village, did not understand the causes, impacts, and ways to overcome stunting. They only know that stunting is characterized by short stature. Stunting is a condition where a child's length or height is less than his age (Rahmadhita, 2020). Stunting in children can be caused by socio-economic conditions, poor maternal nutrition during pregnancy, sick babies, and a lack of nutritional intake for babies. The impact of stunting is a decrease in learning ability due to a lack of cognitive development. The media used for stunt educations are booklets. The advantage of this medium is that it is easy to learn because it contains a lot of information, which is supported by interesting and informative images (Listyarini et al., 2020).

It is important to have information and creative discoveries to maintain new knowledge, which is called knowledge. Health promoters can analyze data from various sources rationally and critically, including traditional learning, information seeking, research in other fields, experience, and problem solving. Such analysis is important to determine the right terms in health promotion actions. A health promoter can conduct research to identify and investigate clinical, professional, or educational problems (Potter & Perry, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Community service activities regarding stunting education have shown positive results, especially in increasing parents' knowledge and awareness regarding the importance of stunting prevention. Through this activity, parents get useful information and are empowered to be more active in maintaining their children's growth and development.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Conceptualization, ESP, and AR writing—preparation of the original draft, editing, ESP, and AR.

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