

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF POSYANDU CADRES: A CASE STUDY ON RAISING AWARENESS OF BALANCED NUTRITION AMONG PREGNANT WOMEN

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Abstract

Posyandu is one form of Community-Sourced Health Efforts that plays an important role in improving maternal and child health quality, including providing education related to balanced nutrition during pregnancy. This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of Posyandu cadres in increasing pregnant women's awareness about the importance of balanced nutrition during pregnancy in Baru Village, Rebo Subdistrict, East Jakarta. This qualitative research approach uses a case study design and purposive sampling technique of Posyandu cadres and pregnant women as participants. Data was collected through in-depth interviews and group discussions (FGDs) to gain a thorough understanding. The results showed that Posyandu cadres are effective motivators and educators in delivering balanced nutrition information to pregnant women. In addition, it was found that cadre effectiveness was influenced by cadre education level, support from health facilities, and active participation of pregnant women. The implications of this study emphasize the importance of ongoing training for Posyandu cadres and increased collaboration between cadres and health workers to ensure pregnant women receive accurate and relevant nutrition information, ultimately contributing to maternal and infant health.

Keywords: *Posyandu cadres, pregnant women awareness, balanced nutrition.*

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1. Introduction

Health development initiatives aim to ensure a healthy life for every individual, enabling communities to achieve optimal health levels. Posyandu (integrated community health posts) is a program under the Community-Sourced Health Efforts (UKBM), which is managed and implemented by local communities to empower them and facilitate access to essential health services [1]. The program's main focus is

to accelerate the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates through the provision of health services that are tailored to community needs [2]

Posyandu encompasses a variety of priority programs, including family planning, maternal and child health (MCH), nutrition, immunization, and diarrhea management. In the context of pregnancy, Posyandu plays a crucial role in delivering balanced nutrition education to expectant mothers. As a community-

based health provider, Posyandu is particularly effective in identifying and addressing pregnancy-related health concerns, including educating pregnant women about their nutritional requirements [3].

In Indonesia, the utilization of Posyandu by pregnant women seeking information on balanced nutrition remains insufficient. Service coverage rates for nutrition education have not met expectations. Data from the 2010 Riskesdas (Basic Health Survey) indicate that a significant number of pregnant women have not received adequate education on the importance of balanced nutrition, which can adversely affect their health and that of their unborn children [4].

The inadequate role of Posyandu cadres in providing nutrition education may have profound implications for maternal and fetal health. Research suggests that approximately 53% of maternal and infant health issues are linked to a lack of understanding of appropriate nutritional practices during pregnancy, underscoring the vital role that Posyandu cadres play in enhancing awareness and implementing relevant interventions [5].

Posyandu has significant potential to enhance community understanding of balanced nutrition during pregnancy, and their effective use can significantly improve the health of pregnant women. Active involvement from Posyandu cadres is crucial for providing targeted education on nutritional needs during pregnancy [6].

However, low utilization rates often stem from a lack of community awareness about these services. Factors affecting pregnant women's participation in Posyandu activities include age, education, health knowledge, attitudes, a shortage of trained staff, and limited service coverage. Thus, increased efforts are needed to raise awareness of Posyandu's importance and enhance the availability of qualified personnel to boost participation among pregnant women [7].

As of 2019, Indonesia had around 330,000 Posyandu across 33 provinces, with DKI Jakarta alone hosting 4,148. In Jakarta, the distribution includes 491 in Central Jakarta, 579 in North Jakarta, 752 in West Jakarta, 1,205 in South Jakarta, 1,089 in East Jakarta, and 32 in the Thousand Islands Regency [8].

Focusing on East Jakarta, specifically in the Pasar Rebo sub-district, several Posyandu operate across five urban villages: Gedong Village, Cijantung Village, Baru Village, Kalisari Village, and Pekayon Village [9].

In Neighborhood Association (RW) 02 of Kelurahan Baru, Pasar Rebo sub-district, East Jakarta, two operational Posyandu serve the community. Posyandu "Lestari" caters to residents from Community Units (RT) 01, 02, 03, 04, and 05, while Posyandu "Kasih Ibu" serves RT 06, 07, 08, and 09. With 241 pregnant women in RW 02, preliminary findings indicate that only a small fraction actively seek out Posyandu services to obtain education on balanced nutrition during pregnancy. This study aims to explore the role of Posyandu cadres in enhancing pregnant women's awareness of balanced nutrition and to identify the factors influencing their participation in the Posyandu program in Kelurahan Baru, Pasar Rebo sub-district, East Jakarta.

2. Method

This research employs a case study approach to illustrate the effectiveness of Posyandu cadres in enhancing the nutritional awareness of pregnant women regarding balanced nutrition during pregnancy in the Baru Urban Village. Data collection methods included in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) to obtain comprehensive information.

The research participants comprised Posyandu cadres operating in Baru Urban Village, as well as pregnant women utilizing Posyandu services. The cadres were purposively selected to provide in-depth insights into their roles in nutrition education. A total of five Posyandu cadres were interviewed in

depth, along with eight pregnant women who participated in the FGDs as service users. Additionally, focus group discussions were conducted with six pregnant women from the community accessing Posyandu services.

The study was conducted from November 2023 to January 2024. Data collected from the interviews and FGDs were transcribed comprehensively and analyzed using coding techniques. The data were subsequently categorized and coded using qualitative data analysis software. The analysis process included axial coding to identify patterns and relationships among data categories. The results of the analysis are presented in the form of narratives, tables, and diagrams to facilitate understanding of the effectiveness of Posyandu cadres in raising pregnant women's awareness of balanced nutrition during pregnancy.

3. Results and Discussion

a. **Factors Influencing the Participation of Posyandu Cadres**

In the context of the effectiveness of Posyandu cadres in enhancing the nutritional awareness of pregnant women regarding balanced nutrition, several factors influencing cadre participation are identified. Findings from in-depth interviews indicate that the internal motivation of Posyandu cadres in Baru Urban Village serves as the primary driver of their engagement. Generally, Posyandu cadres exhibit a high degree of social spirit and a strong desire to enhance their knowledge of health, particularly in relation to pregnant women and children under five. Actively involved cadres express that their engagement is not merely about delivering services; it also encompasses learning and sharing knowledge.

One cadre stated, "Being a Posyandu cadre provides me with the opportunity to deepen my understanding of nutrition and maternal health. I feel it is very

valuable to share this information with pregnant women in our community."

Another cadre stated, "I enjoy sharing knowledge and feel that although I have not pursued formal education, I can expand my knowledge informally through Posyandu activities."

Conversely, external factors also play a crucial role. Support from government programs and awareness of the importance of health initiatives for mothers and infants serve as additional motivators for cadres. They recognize that their role extends beyond community assistance, contributing to government objectives in fostering healthy children and a more health-conscious society. One cadre expressed, "We want to ensure that pregnant women receive accurate information regarding balanced nutrition. This is part of our contribution to supporting public health as a whole."

b. **Services and Programs Provided by Posyandu Cadres**

The Posyandu cadres in Baru Urban Village offer a range of services aimed at enhancing pregnant women's understanding of balanced nutrition. Their primary activities include providing nutrition education during pregnancy, training on healthy food choices, and monitoring nutritional status. They regularly conduct educational sessions at the Posyandu and supply relevant materials to help pregnant women comprehend the significance of adequate nutritional intake.

During focus group discussions, cadres reported, "We frequently hold workshops that address balanced nutrition during pregnancy. We provide practical information on beneficial *food options and how to prepare them*." Additionally, they conduct individual consultations to monitor the nutritional progress of pregnant

women and offer tailored advice based on individual needs.

c. **Challenges in Raising Awareness Among Pregnant Women**

Despite the various efforts made by Posyandu cadres, challenges persist in enhancing the awareness of pregnant women about balanced nutrition. One of the primary challenges is the lack of knowledge and trust among some pregnant women. Several women expressed skepticism regarding the information provided, feeling that it was either unconvincing or not relevant to their needs. As one cadre noted, "Some pregnant women remain doubtful about the nutritional information we provide. They may have never heard of the benefits of balanced nutrition before, or they feel that this information does not align with their needs."

Additionally, accessibility challenges, such as distance and timing, also pose significant problems. Some pregnant women are unable to attend educational sessions due to personal reasons such as work commitments or the distance to the Posyandu..

d. **Strategies to Address Challenges**

Strategies to address these challenges, Posyandu cadres have implemented several strategies. They adopt a continuous approach by visiting pregnant women at home and conducting more flexible group sessions. Furthermore, the cadres undergo training to enhance their skills in delivering information in a more engaging and comprehensible manner.

"We strive to overcome accessibility barriers by conducting home visits and hosting more flexible sessions. We also involve pregnant women in smaller group discussions to ensure they receive the information they need," stated one cadre during a focus group discussion.

e. **Impact of the Posyandu Cadre Programs**

Overall, the Posyandu cadre program in Baru Urban Village has had a positive impact on raising awareness among pregnant women regarding balanced nutrition. Through a variety of services and programs, the cadres have successfully improved pregnant women's understanding of the importance of healthy eating during pregnancy. Despite the challenges faced, the active involvement of cadres in this health program has yielded beneficial outcomes for the health of both mothers and infants.

The engagement of Posyandu cadres in outreach and training, along with the support they provide to pregnant women, significantly contributes to improving community health quality. By adopting effective strategies, Posyandu cadres are equipped to navigate various obstacles and continue working toward better public health outcomes [10].

Furthermore, social motivation plays a crucial role in community empowerment, particularly within the context of maternal health. This motivation encompasses the ability to inspire, anticipate, activate, stimulate, engage, and encourage pregnant women to adopt healthy lifestyles during pregnancy. Posyandu cadres are instrumental in this empowerment process, utilizing both internal and external motivations to address barriers, leverage resources, and enhance their skills in promoting maternal and infant health [11].

Within the realm of maternal health education, low levels of education frequently impede access to vital information. Many pregnant women remain bound by cultural values that may be inconsistent with modern health guidelines. However, individuals within the community who recognize the significance of

maternal and infant health can act as catalysts in Posyandu programs, actively engaging in educating pregnant women about balanced nutrition and care during pregnancy [12].

Community-based health services, such as the Posyandu program, are integral to the empowerment process surrounding maternal and infant health. These initiatives allow communities to manage their own healthcare centers in alignment with their specific needs. The Posyandu cadres, driven by altruistic principles, exemplify dedication to improving community health. The cadre coordinators, often village midwives, play a crucial role in orchestrating the efforts of the cadres and fostering social capital through cooperation within social groups established to support the health of pregnant women [13].

Harmony within the community is essential for facilitating communication and achieving shared objectives in maternal healthcare. The Posyandu serves as a vital forum for communication and public health services, playing a strategic role in human resource development and the attainment of health standards for mothers and infants, as noted in Effendy's research [14].

The commitment of Posyandu cadres can be further reinforced through opportunities for ongoing training and socialization, particularly targeting new cadres. For those who have not yet undergone formal training, the Posyandu handbook serves as an invaluable reference tool for conducting Posyandu-related activities. This resource strengthens the role of cadres in the broader context of maternal health empowerment [15].

Direct education on maternal health services equips Posyandu cadres to effectively discharge their responsibilities in empowering

pregnant women. Training acts as a critical mechanism that leverages external resources; the level of training and participation in the Posyandu program directly influences the effectiveness of the cadres. Such training aims to enhance the understanding and skills of cadres in promoting maternal health during pregnancy [16].

The role of the community in maternal healthcare involves optimizing local resources and potential. This engagement comprises three main groups: health motivators, health educators, and healthcare providers. Health motivators inspire pregnant women to participate in Posyandu activities, such as nutritional education and health check-ups. Health educators impart knowledge regarding clean and healthy living practices (PHBS), hygiene, and environmental sanitation. Healthcare providers are tasked with registration, weight monitoring, developmental tracking, child growth counseling, administering vitamin A, and providing immunizations for infants and toddlers. Empowerment occurs when Posyandu cadres demonstrate commitment and integrity in effectively addressing the health needs of pregnant women and infants.

4. Conclusion

Posyandu cadres play a pivotal role in supporting maternal health as health motivators, educators, and service providers through the Posyandu framework. Community empowerment within the context of pregnancy manifests through motivational efforts to enhance the health of mothers and infants, alongside the capacity to identify needs and barriers within maternal healthcare services. Understanding the available community resources is also crucial. To improve the participation of pregnant women in Posyandu programs, targeted planning and strategic empowerment

efforts involving community leaders, local customs, government entities, and community organizations are imperative.

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