



Knowledge of Young Women Regarding the Components of 'My Plate' as a Strategy for Stunting Prevention

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Stunting represents a chronic malnutrition process with significant implications for life productivity. Adolescents, especially young women, wield considerable influence in stunting prevention. Nutritional education stands out as a key strategy in addressing stunting, especially among teenagers. Enhancing nutritional education for adolescents holds promise for shaping their future dietary patterns and behaviors, with knowledge serving as a pivotal catalyst for attitude change.

Objective: This research aims to assess the knowledge of young women at SMPN 1 Ciamis regarding the components of 'My Plate' as a preventive measure against stunting.

Method: The research methodology employed is descriptive research. The study population comprises young women at SMPN 1 Ciamis, with a sample size of 214 individuals selected through accidental sampling. The questionnaire serves as the primary measuring instrument, and univariate analysis is applied for data analysis.

Result: The research findings reveal that the majority of young women exhibit sufficient knowledge, accounting for 91.1%, while the second-largest group demonstrates a lower level of knowledge at 6.1%.

Conclusion: There remains a need for increased awareness and socialization regarding the contents of 'My Plate' as a preventative measure against stunting. Collaborative efforts between schools and healthcare providers are encouraged to implement regular programs, including counseling specifically addressing 'My Plate' components and broader initiatives focused on stunting prevention.

Keywords: fill my plate, knowledge, stunting, young women

Introduction

Stunting remains a pressing nutritional issue on a national scale, manifesting as a protracted state of malnutrition with profound implications for growth and productivity. Global data from UNICEF in 2020 indicated a staggering 149.2 million children affected by stunting (De Onis and Branca, 2016; UNICEF, 2021). Indonesia reports a stunting prevalence of approximately 37%, with West Java recording 24.5% and Ciamis Regency documenting 16% based on the 2021 nutritional status survey. Alarming, the prevalence in Ciamis Regency is projected to escalate to 18.6% in 2022, surpassing the targeted 14%. Key determinants of stunting include low exclusive breastfeeding rates, socioeconomic factors, prematurity, short birth intervals, and low maternal education (Nshimyiryo et al., 2019; De Onis and Branca, 2016; West Java Provincial Health Office, 2019; Keino et al., 2014; Mamay, 2023).

Stunting prevention is pivotal during the adolescent stage, particularly among girls as a preparatory measure for future motherhood. Fostering adequate nutritional knowledge in adolescent girls can initiate early maternal preparedness, influencing pregnancy outcomes and offspring well-being. Malnourished teenage girls are at risk of stunting, emphasizing the significance of addressing nutrition during adolescence (Noviasty et al., 2020; Patimah, 2021).

Adolescents, especially young women, play a crucial role in stunting prevention. Comprehensive efforts encompass nutritional education, the promotion of healthy practices (PHBS), balanced nutritional patterns, and targeted communication strategies. The "Fill My Plate" movement serves as a socialization platform for balanced nutrition guidelines, facilitating the consumption of nutritionally adequate foods (WHO, 2018; Ministry of Health, 2022; Mubarak et al., 2022).

Optimizing nutritional education for teenagers has far-reaching consequences, shaping their dietary habits and future behaviors. Knowledge stands as a pivotal factor in attitudinal shifts and forms the foundation for behavioral changes in adolescents (WHO, 2018; Anjaswarni et al., 2022).

SMPN 1 Ciamis, among the junior high schools in Ciamis with the highest concentration of young women, lacks educational initiatives on stunting and 'My Plate' content. Interviews with the school revealed a general lack of awareness among teenagers regarding stunting prevention and the practical application of 'My Plate' guidelines in their daily lives. This research seeks to shed light on the knowledge levels of young women at SMPN 1 Ciamis regarding stunting prevention and 'My Plate' guidelines.

Objective

This research aims to assess the knowledge of young women at SMPN 1 Ciamis regarding the components of 'My Plate' as a preventive measure against stunting.

Method

This research is descriptive research, namely to describe the knowledge of young women about the contents of my plate as a way to prevent stunting. The population in this study were young women at SMP Negeri 1 Ciamis, with a total of 431 people. The sampling technique uses incidental sampling, with sample calculation using the Slovin formula. The number of samples obtained was 214 people. The measuring tool used is a questionnaire that will measure young women's knowledge about the contents of my plate as an effort to prevent stunting. Univariate data analysis to obtain frequency distribution.

Result

Based on the research results, the following is the frequency distribution of adolescent knowledge.

Table 1. Distribution of Knowledge of Young Women

Knowledge	N	%
Good	6	2.8
Enough	195	91.1
not enough	13	6.1

Table 1 revealed that 91.1% of young women had adequate knowledge, while 6.1% of them were less knowledgeable than the majority.

Table 2. Distribution of Young Women's Knowledge Questionnaire

Question	Answer (%)	
	Correct	Wrong
Stunting is a condition where a person's height is shorter than normal for their age.	2.3	97.7
Stunting usually occurs due to repeated infections and is not related to diet.	2.8	97.2
Stunting is caused by a lack of nutritional intake.	2.8	97.2
Stunting impacts cognitive abilities.	2.3	97.7
Stunting cannot be prevented by eating a balanced diet.	3.3	96.7
Foods such as rice, bread, wheat are staple foods.	2.8	97.2
The staple foods on my plate make up 2/3 of the plate.	5.1	94.9
Foods included in side dishes are fish, meat and tempeh.	79.0	21.0
Shrimp, fish and meat are sources of animal protein.	76.6	23.4
Tempeh and tofu are sources of vegetable protein.	76.6	23.4
The vegetables on my plate make up 1/3 of half my plate.	7.5	92.5
Fruits are a source of vitamins and minerals	87.9	12.1
Snacks high in sugar and fat are good for consumption every day	3.7	96.3
Eating lots of vegetables and fruit can help the body get important nutrients	91.6	8.4
Teenagers should drink at least 8 glasses per day	3.7	96.3

The average response to the questions about the definition, consequences, and prevention of stunting as well as sharing what's on my plate is incorrect, according to the above table.

Discussion

Every individual possesses a distinctive knowledge framework, derived from their perceptions and familiarity with specific subjects. Knowledge accrues with the frequency of information intake, drawing from varied sources, including electronic and mass media, and contributes to the formation of positive beliefs.

The respondents' knowledge was assessed through a questionnaire encompassing 15 statements related to stunting and 'My Plate' guidelines. The questionnaire covered topics such as the definition and impact of stunting, its causes and prevention, as well as the nutritional composition distribution in 'My Plate' and food sources contributing to balanced nutrients. Among the 214 young women at SMPN 1 Ciamis, the majority exhibited satisfactory knowledge (91.1%), while a smaller portion demonstrated a lesser degree of understanding (6.1%). This underscores that a substantial proportion of respondents possess awareness regarding the contents of 'My Plate' as a strategy for stunting prevention. Nevertheless, there were notable inaccuracies in responses, particularly concerning the meaning and impact of stunting, prevention strategies, and the nutritional composition distribution on 'My Plate.'

The researchers postulate that respondents' knowledge about stunting and 'My Plate' remains insufficient due to limited socialization efforts on stunting prevention, especially through education on 'My Plate' contents, conducted by health service centers and educational institutions. Interviews with schools revealed a scarcity of counseling or health education on stunting and 'My Plate.' Respondents primarily acquired information through social media and exhibited minimal proactive efforts to seek knowledge independently.

Initiating nutrition education in adolescence is pivotal for preparing individuals for the preconception period. Educating teenagers is crucial for fostering positive perceptions and motivation to prevent stunting. The reinforcement of knowledge in adolescents aims to induce behavioral changes related to health maintenance. Information dissemination serves as a strategy to increase knowledge, fostering awareness and, ultimately, aligning behaviors with acquired knowledge (Sriwiyanti et al., 2022).

The research uncovered a notable discrepancy in respondents' understanding of the distribution of nutritional composition on 'My Plate,' with only 5.1% answering correctly. The 'My Plate' guidelines, endorsed by the government through the Fill My Plate campaign, advocate for balanced nutrition by dividing the plate into sections. This includes allocating 50% for fruits and vegetables, 50% divided between protein-rich dishes (both animal and plant-based), and a designated portion for carbohydrates (Ministry of Health, 2022b).

Adolescence, marked by accelerated physical, mental, emotional, and social growth, introduces various health and nutrition challenges. Nutrition-related issues such as undernutrition or obesity often arise during this period. Knowledge emerges as a pivotal factor influencing nutritional outcomes in adolescents. A well-informed adolescent populace is better positioned to enhance their health outcomes (Brown, KM, 2018).

Conclusion

The study's findings indicate that the typical respondent possesses sufficient knowledge. This is because, as one of the ways to prevent stunting, there is still a lack of socialisation regarding the food on my plate. In order to prevent stunting as early as possible, it is expected that the school will collaborate with health service providers to hold regular programmes like counselling related to what's specifically on my plate and health in general. Counselling programmemes or other programmemes can be inserted into activities held by the school, such as the daughterhood programme.

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Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Ethical approval

This research has received ethical approval from the Health Research Ethic Commission of the STIKes Muhammadiyah Ciamis number 011/KEPK-STIKESMUCIS/IX/2023.

Authors' contribution

Each author contributed equally in all the parts of the research. All authors have critically reviewed and approved the final draft and are responsible for the content and similarity index of the manuscript.

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