




# Cadre Assistance in Utilizing the Infant and Young Child Feeding Counseling Card in Harjosari Village Area

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## Abstract

The Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) program aims to monitor the growth and development of infants and young children through Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding, and appropriate complementary feeding (MP-ASI) until the age of two years. This study aims to evaluate the role and support of Posyandu cadres in Harjosari Village, who are often the closest and most accessible support system for mothers. To enhance their effectiveness, these cadres need improved knowledge and skills in growth monitoring, breastfeeding support, complementary feeding practices, and counseling techniques. The method used in this activity emphasized hands-on practice and participatory discussion to facilitate deeper understanding and application. Based on pre-test and post-test assessments, cadre knowledge increased by 12.5%. Statistical analysis using the paired t-test showed a significant improvement in knowledge ( $p\text{-value} = 0.0001$ ), indicating the effectiveness of the intervention. The findings suggest that with proper training and support, Posyandu cadres can play a more active role in educating mothers. One recommendation is for cadres to initiate practical classes and discussions using infant and young child feeding counseling cards to improve maternal understanding and practices. This approach can contribute to ensuring that feeding practices are implemented correctly and appropriately, supporting optimal child growth and development.

## A. Introduction

The millennial generation has enormous potential to understand the quality and sustainability of the nation. As human beings, children have the right to fulfillment, protection and respect for their human rights. Well-planned and intensive education is essential for the next generation of children in this country to achieve quality growth and development at all levels, including physical and mental abilities. Achieving quality growth and development while upholding children's rights, a number of efforts have been made including providing good food to children under 2 years.

To achieve optimal growth and development, the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Nutrition. There are four recommendations from WHO/UNICEF, first within half an hour after birth, breastfeeding can be done. Second, until the baby is 6 months old, give only breast milk (ASI) as the drink of choice. Third, breastmilk supplementation (MP-ASI) from 6 months to 24 months and fourth, continue breastfeeding until the age of 24 months or older. It states that complementary foods are made using locally sourced and affordable ingredients based on social and cultural factors. Improving infant and young child nutrition and health services is part of the National Long and Medium Term Health Development Plan (RPJPMN), which complements several recommendations from WHO/UNICEF (Campbell et al., 2018; Zakarija-Grković et al., 2020).

Indonesia has multiple nutrition problems, namely malnutrition and overnutrition. The issue of nutritional value is directly influenced by food consumption and disease, which is directly influenced by parental habits, food availability, socioeconomics, culture and politics (Hardianti et al., 2018). Malnutrition accounts for 60% of all deaths of children under 5 years old, and two-thirds of these deaths are caused by poor nutrition, as stated by Murtiyarini et al. (2014).

Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) data in 2018 showed a high prevalence of malnutrition in Indonesian toddlers including underweight toddlers (BB/U) as much as 17.7%, stunting toddlers (PB/U or TB/U) as much as 30.8% and underweight toddlers (BB/PB or BB/TB) as much as 10.2%. The causes of malnutrition in toddlers include poor infant and child feeding (Solomons & Vossenaar, 2018). Short-term disturbances in brain development, intelligence, growth disorders, and metabolic disorders can result from nutritional problems that affect the 1000 HPK period (Lestari et al., 2022).

Several other research findings also indicate that health workers' skills and knowledge on IYCF counseling are weak. Correcting gaps or errors in training requires additional hours of supervised training and support assistance to improve participants' skills and confidence (Rahmawati et al., 2022). This is shown in research from Rahmawati et al. (2019) showing that triple mentoring can improve counseling skills, knowledge and attitudes. The results of research by Madede et al. (2017) showed that supportive care increases job satisfaction and improves motivation and performance of health workers.

Stunting was experienced by 436 infants or equivalent to a prevalence of 5.43%, according to the summary of Puskesmas weighing data listed in E-PPGBM which was submitted by the Head of the Pekanbaru City Health Office in February 2020 at the Stunting Roundtable activity.

Nutritional problems must be addressed immediately because they adversely affect the human life cycle and the development of future generations, and increase the risk of infectious and non-communicable diseases. Providing good nutrition to children is one of the important aspects in efforts to reduce malnutrition. It begins with early breastfeeding initiation (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding (ASI), and complementary feeding based on age, amount, and nature.

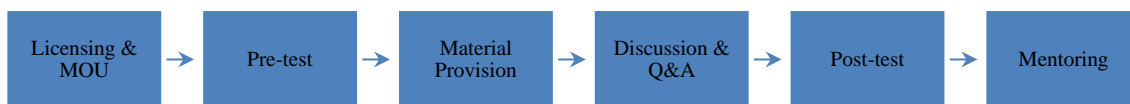
The Healthy Indonesia Program and Family Approach (PIS-PK), as well as the policy of accelerating the improvement of community nutrition, especially the infant-and-child feeding (IYCF) strategy, are very important to achieve good nutrition and health conditions for mothers, infants and children at an early age. Seeing the problems in the field, we are interested in assisting cadres in utilizing the counseling card issued by the Ministry of Health in Infant and Young Child Feeding in the Harjosari Village Area so that there is an increase in breastfeeding achievements, infants and children get food that suits their needs.

## B. Methods

The community service activity was carried out over a period of one month in Harjosari Village and involved 20 Posyandu cadres as participants. The target group was determined based on characteristics such as age, education level, and occupation to ensure relevance and suitability of the material delivered. The method of implementation included lectures and guided discussions to encourage active participation and practical understanding. Evaluation of the cadres' knowledge improvement was conducted using a pre-test and post-test instrument designed to measure comprehension of topics such as growth monitoring, breastfeeding, complementary feeding, and counseling skills. The procedures involved delivering material in interactive sessions followed by direct application through discussion of real-life cases. Data analysis was performed using a paired t-test to determine the significance of knowledge improvement before and after the activity. The scope of this method was limited to assessing short-term knowledge gain and did not include long-term behavior change or application in the field.

This community service uses three methods namely materials, exercises and discussions. Based on the action plan which includes tests, some materials, discussions and assistance, activities are carried out face-to-face for five days. At the time of mentoring posyandu cadres were accompanied by a community service team so that the results of the activities could be applied to the handling of cases observed in each posyandu. The community service team will help implement the policy in each posyandu area and reach out to each participant to help overcome early childhood nutrition problems in the posyandu area of each participant.

The stages of implementing community service are summarized in the form of a flowchart as follows:



**Figure 1.** Flow of Community Service Activities

### C. Results and Discussion

This community service was carried out on cadres in the Harjosari Village area, Sukajadi, Pekanbaru. The number of participants who participated in community service activities was 20 cadres. Table 1 presents data on categorization by age, education level and occupation

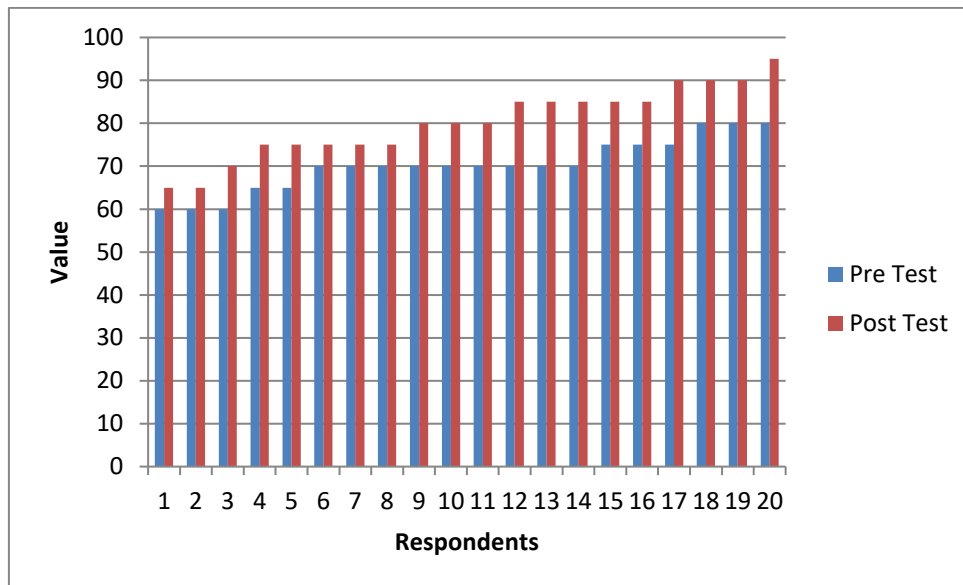
**Table 1.** Characteristics of Posyandu Cadres

Characteristics of Nutrition Workers	n	%
<b>Age</b>		
25 - 35 years old	1	5
35 - 45	8	40
45 - 55	10	50
55 - 65 years	1	5
<b>Education</b>		
HIGH SCHOOL	17	85
Diploma	3	15
S1	0	0
<b>Jobs</b>		
Housewife	17	85
PNS	2	10
Private	1	5

This community service activity was carried out offline in the classroom of the Riau Health Ministry Poltekkes campus. The cadres gained insight into the use of counseling cards by analyzing the results before and after the test. The provision of material was carried out for 5 consecutive days, as for the material presented including:

- Growth monitoring
- Referral of sick children to health facilities
- Infant and young child feeding concepts
- Breastfeeding
- Nutrition and maternal health
- Feeding pregnant women, breastfeeding and complementary feeding

On the first day, a pre-test was conducted where the cadres received initial information on the use of nutrition advice cards for infants and children. The delivery of material on the fifth day is an important point or expected result of this community service. The community service method used focuses on discussion and training to relevant parties in the field regarding the use of advice cards in communicating information related to IYCF. Using this method, participants can improve their knowledge and skills (Brkić-Jovanović et al., 2021). The health sector is not the only focus of nutrition problems, so multidisciplinary discussions can provide optimal results (Risnah et al., 2018).



**Figure 2.** Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Figure 2 shows that knowledge on the use of counseling cards for infant and young child feeding improved. The pretest resulted in an average score of 70.25, with a range of scores from 60 to 80. Almost all questions that could not be answered by respondents were questions related to children's eating habits. This is because the respondents had not previously known about this matter. After the delivery of material and assistance from the community service team, respondents were asked to answer questions using a questionnaire. The average score obtained during the post-test was 80.25, the lowest was 65 and the highest was 95. The paired *t-test* results had a p-value of 0.0001. It is clear that knowledge sharing on the use of counseling cards used in infant and young child feeding has increased.

Training on infant and young child feeding conducted in Klaten District by Wahyuningsih & Handayani (2015) proved to improve the knowledge framework. Similarly, Rahmawati et al. (2019) in their research showed a significant difference in the value of information related to children after intensive child training and child nutrition (KPMBA-I).



**Figure 3.** Material Delivery

The provision of materials on the utilization of infant and young child feeding counseling cards for cadres has shown significant success regarding cadres' knowledge and skills in delivery and application at posyandu. The discussion and content became the main focus of the community service approach. In the working area of Puskesmas Mangan, the nutritional status of children is influenced by Poshandu cadres, as suggested by research (Onthonie et al., 2015). By taking the initiative, executives can act as community leaders who bridge the gap between health authorities and professionals and the community, assisting the community in identifying and addressing health needs.



**Figure 4.** Posyandu Cadre Assistance

Based on Figure 4, cadres who monitor exclusive breastfeeding became more knowledgeable and skilled after receiving assistance on the use of infant and young child feeding counseling cards. The mentoring of infant and young child feeding cadres using the counseling card was the first activity in the Harjosari area. This mentoring activity is a two-way interpersonal interaction in a relaxed atmosphere so that mothers are more open to sharing parenting patterns when breastfeeding their babies. Then the mother rated the advice given as useful for her information. At the end of the mentoring, the cadres again asked for the mother's understanding attitude and encouraged the mother to take steps to improve her toddler's nutrition. Parents play an important role in ensuring their child's nutritional intake for growth and development. During the time span of 12 to 59 months, children show rapid growth, development and activity (Hatijar, 2023), it is important to maintain a balanced and dynamic parenting position for both parents. Good nutrition is the congruence of a child with its parents

Counseling, nutrition education, and baby and child cards during coaching sessions can develop maternal insights as a starting point for behavior modification. Positive behavior can be influenced by the level of knowledge a person has. Conversely, a lower level of education makes it difficult for a person to approach newly introduced behavioral values (Nurwulansari et al., 2018).

Eating behaviors associated with childhood are influenced by the diet taught early on. The act of feeding children is an important responsibility for parents. The responsibility of being a mother includes providing education and nurturing to children, ultimately leading them towards self-development. It is best that fathers are willing to help with their children's eating habits (Probowati et al., 2017).

Based on the assistance, several cadres said that the use of infant and young child feeding counseling cards is very important in infant nutrition from the beginning of fetal formation or pregnancy to the growth of 0 to 2 years of age (1000 HPK), according to them it is very effective against these problems. Although it takes time and change, the infant and young child feeding counseling card is a recommended solution for children who already have nutritional problems.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Carrying out community service activities for cadres in the Melur Puskesmas working area in the form of assistance went well, this was shown by the enthusiasm and commitment of the cadres who actively participated which was reflected in the improvement of the skills and knowledge of cadres about the use of infant and child feeding counseling cards.

This community service motivates cadres to provide better information on infant and young child nutrition especially to pregnant, lactating and young mothers. To improve the quality of service, it is also important to remember how many people to serve, therefore it is expected that Puskesmas Melur is able to analyze the needs of cadres in each posyandu.

#### **E. Acknowledgment**

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