

## UNDERSTANDING AND ATTITUDE OF NURSING STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS IN SUPPORTING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS TO ALLEVIATE STUNTING EMERGENCIES IN SOUTH ACEH

Fathimi<sup>1</sup>, Dewi Marianthi<sup>2</sup>, Yenni Sasmita<sup>3</sup>, Desriati Devi<sup>4</sup>, Hasniah<sup>5</sup>

Poltekkes Kemenkes Aceh, Indonesia <sup>1,2,3,4,5</sup>

Email: fathimi81@gmail.com, marianthi\_dw@yahoo.com,

yennisasmit@gmail.com, desriatidevi@gmail.com, hasniahsm@yahoo.com

### ABSTRACT

*Stunting is still a significant public health problem in South Aceh, potentially threatening the healthy and intelligent generation. The Health Office and DP3AKB of South Aceh Regency carried out stunting cracks to deal with this issue, which is part of the national development agenda. Stunting not only inhibits children's physical growth, but also interferes with brain development, affecting their mental and academic abilities. In 2021, the prevalence of stunting among children under five in South Aceh reached 27.3%, better than other regions in Aceh, but still far from the national target of 14% in 2024. This study aims to determine the relationship between understanding and attitudes of nursing students in supporting local government programs to overcome stunting. The method used is observational with a cross-sectional study design. The results showed that 73% of students had a good understanding of stunting, and 68% showed a positive attitude towards government programs. The final analysis emphasizes the importance of increasing public understanding of stunting, with the active role of final year students expected to strengthen support for local government programs in an effort to alleviate the stunting problem in South Aceh.*

**KEYWORDS** Student Understanding, Stunting Emergency, Attitude



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### INTRODUCTION

Wealth and thrones are not something that should always be pursued, but health is an important thing that must always be prioritized. A beautiful tomorrow starts from now, the quality of human resources starts from the intake of nutrition at home. Children are the future of parents and the nation. Prevent stunting in children by providing good nutrients and nutrients and enough for their bodies to grow and develop according to their needs.

Situation analysis was carried out to understand specific nutritional problems in the first 1,000 days of life (1,000 HPK) households. The results of this analysis

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will be the basis for the formulation of recommendations for activities that must be carried out. South Aceh Regency has been designated as a stunting focus location in 2022. From the results of the 2021 Indonesian Nutrition Status Study (SSGI) in South Aceh, stunted children under five are 27.3 percent, ranked 18th out of 23 districts (Sobari, 2016). Stunting or shortness is a condition of failure to grow in children under five due to chronic malnutrition, especially at 1,000 HPK so that the child is too short for his age. This condition is caused by the occurrence of chronic malnutrition that occurs for a long time. Children must continue to grow into adolescents because adolescence is a transition period from children to adults where there is very rapid physical, mental and emotional growth. Therefore, it is important to consume foods that contain nutrients for the growth and development process (South Aceh Health Office, 2022).

To reduce stunting, there are eleven programs that must be considered, two of which are directed at the growth phase. Namely, the pregnant woman phase or before giving birth and the postpartum phase, which is mainly in babies aged 0-24 months. We are pursuing these two phases, because this phase is the most determinant of stunting. The cause of high stunting is in these phases. Of the 11 intervention programs, one of them is an educational, educational, and promotional program that covers both phases of growth. Meanwhile, the other 10 interventions focused on each of the life phases that had the highest determinants of stunting. The intervention is focused on adolescent girls in grades 7 and 10 through blood haemoglobin measurements so that it is known whether adolescent girls are anemic or not, as well as pregnant women through antenatal care (ANC) services (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023).

Adolescence is a transition period from children to adults where there is very rapid physical, mental and emotional growth. Therefore, it is important to consume foods that contain nutrients for the growth and development process. Adolescent women who consume enough nutritious food will be maintained their reproductive health, so that they will become healthy mothers-to-be and if their condition is maintained until pregnancy will be able to give birth to healthy and intelligent children, thus the series of stunting events will not only have an impact on the individual, but will greatly affect the condition or occurrence of stunting emergencies from generation to generation, the same is true of stunting incidents in Aceh (Aceh Health Office, 2022).

There are allegations of low exclusive breastfeeding for toddlers (0-59 months), in addition to not being given breast milk perfectly by mothers, the unemployment factor is still high and has a difficult impact on meeting daily needs so that toddlers lack important intakes such as animal and vegetable protein and also iron is a trigger for a high incidence of stunting. In areas with high poverty, it is often found that toddlers are malnourished due to the inability of parents to meet the primary needs of the household (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

The rate of stunting as an impact of malnutrition on toddlers in Indonesia exceeds the limit set by WHO. Stunting cases are mostly found in areas with high poverty and low education levels. Concern about the impact of stunting is a condition when toddlers have a height below average. This is due to the nutritional

intake provided, for a long time, not in accordance with needs. Stunting has the potential to slow down brain development, with long-term impacts in the form of mental retardation, low learning ability, and the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity.

The main causes of stunting include insufficient nutritional and nutritional intake to meet the needs of children, wrong parenting due to lack of knowledge and education for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers, poor sanitation of the living environment such as lack of clean water facilities and the unavailability of adequate toilet facilities as well as limited access to health facilities needed for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and toddlers. By province, judging from the data from the 2021 Indonesian Nutrition Status Study (SSGI). Aceh Province occupies the third highest position after East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Sulawesi in the first and second positions. The prevalence of stunting in Aceh is higher than the national average. The number of stunting cases that occur in Indonesia has prompted the government to provide special directions contained in Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction. The Aceh Government has established a Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS) in Aceh Province. One of the areas in the TPPS team is the Behavior Change Communication and Family Assistance Sector which has the task of increasing public awareness and encouraging changes in community behavior to accelerate stunting reduction (DPPPA Aceh, 2023).

The government targets a 14 percent reduction in stunting prevalence in 2024 and a sustainable development target in 2030 based on achievements in 2024. Based on the Five Pillars of Accelerating Stunting Reduction, a National Action Plan (RAN) will be prepared to encourage and strengthen convergence between programs through the approach of families at risk of stunting (Presidential Decree No. 72, 2021).

The results of the study showed that access to health services, maternal work and attitudes towards 1000 HPK had a significant effect on stunting status. This is the main encouragement for all parties to increase access to health services during the pandemic, especially related to integrated management services for sick toddlers, providing calcium to pregnant women and routine pregnancy check-ups (Islami & Khourh, 2021).

The results of another study stated that the results of the analysis found that there was a relationship between mothers' knowledge and attitudes regarding stunting in stunting cases along with the significance scale (p) of knowledge which was 0.038 and attitude which was 0.011. The correlation coefficient (r) of knowledge was -0.201 and attitude was -0.245. This shows that the higher the mother's knowledge and attitude regarding stunting, the lower the stunting incidence rate. In this regard, it is hoped that all elements of the government, especially the Puskesmas, will support their duties to conduct reviews and develop health programs, especially related to stunting prevention (Paramita et al., 2021).

The results of other related studies showed that there was a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding (p value 0.013) and immunization status (p value 0.000) with the incidence of stunting in children aged 2-5 years at the Darussalam Health Center, Aceh Besar Regency (Rahmi et al., 2022). Health centers and health

workers are expected to create programs to reduce the risk of stunting in children under five such as providing counseling to the community about stunting prevention and other programs that can reduce the incidence of stunting (Setiawan et al., 2018).

Considering that Aceh is currently ranked third after East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Sulawesi with the highest number of stunting out of 34 provinces throughout Indonesia, it is not impossible that this ranking will increase to be even bigger, the challenges ahead, especially increasing prevention efforts through providing information and understanding to the community, especially mothers-to-be (Women of Childbearing Age) are very important. Women of Childbearing Age is the main milestone in the struggle to alleviate stunting because healthy babies are born to healthy mothers, meet nutritional needs during pregnancy, after birth (1000 HPK) and during the age of toddlers, this becomes easy if the understanding of the importance of policies on stunting alleviation reaches the community in general and nursing students are an extension of the government as the next generation of the nation to be at the forefront of filling and convey correct information to the public.

Based on the above background, the author feels the need to conduct research related to the understanding and attitude of nursing students about stunting as an effort to increase support for government programs with the title "Understanding and Attitudes of Nursing Study Program Students in Supporting Local Government Programs to Alleviate Stunting Emergencies".

## RESEARCH METHOD

This type of research is an analytical survey with a cross-sectional approach. The population is 56 students of the South Aceh Nursing Study Program Level III for the 2023/2024 Academic Year (Based on the initial survey), with a total sampling technique where all Level III students are used as research samples. The instruments in this study consist of; Questionnaires and academic grades. Primary data was obtained through the dissemination of questionnaires related to students' understanding and attitudes towards stunting alleviation programs. Secondary data was obtained through academic data to find out the picture of learning achievement and other supporting data. The data obtained in this study were processed using the Chi-Square statistical test with a degree of significance ( $\alpha$ ) = 5%.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1 Frequency Distribution of Demographic Data for South Aceh Nursing Study Program Students in 2024 (n=56)**

| No | Demographic Data       | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----|------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Status:                |               |                |
|    | a. Biological children | 48            | 85,7           |
|    | b. Stepchild           | 5             | 8,9            |
|    | c. Adopted child       | 3             | 5,4            |
|    | Total                  | 56            | 100            |
| 2. | Gender:                |               |                |

|                               |    |      |
|-------------------------------|----|------|
| a. Man                        | 6  | 10,7 |
| b. Woman                      | 50 | 89,3 |
| Total                         | 56 | 100  |
| 3. Parent Work:               |    |      |
| a. ASN/TNI/POLRI              | 34 | 60,7 |
| b. Farmers/Laborers/Fishermen | 6  | 10,7 |
| c. Private                    | 13 | 23,2 |
| d. Not fixed                  | 3  | 5,3  |
| Total                         | 56 | 100  |

Source: Primary Data (processed, 2024)

**Table 2 Distribution of Frequency of Understanding of South Aceh Education Study Program Students in 2024 (n=56)**

| No | Student Understanding | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----|-----------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Good                  | 43            | 76             |
| 2. | Less                  | 13            | 23             |
|    | Total                 | 56            | 100            |

Source: Primary Data (Processed, 2024)

**Table 3 Distribution of Attitude Frequency of South Aceh Nursing Study Program Students in 2024 (n=56)**

| No | Adolescent attitude readiness | Frequency (f) | Percentage (%) |
|----|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | Good                          | 41            | 73,2           |
| 2. | Less                          | 15            | 26,8           |
|    | Total                         | 56            | 100            |

Source: Primary Data (Processed, 2024)

**Table 4 Distribution of Student Understanding of Stunting Emergencies with Attitudes Supporting Government Programs in 2022 (n=56)**

| Attitudes Supporting Government Programs in 2022 (n= 66) |                       |                    |       |      |      |     |      |         |       |             |
|--|-----------------------|--------------------|-------|------|------|-----|------|---------|-------|-------------|
| No   | Student Understanding | Attitude Readiness |       |      |      | Sum |      | P value | OR    | CI 95%      |
|  |                       | Good               |       | Less |      |     |      |         |       |             |
|  |                       | F                  | %     | f    | %    | F   | %    |         |       |             |
| 1  | Good                  | 29                 | 85,3  | 5    | 14,7 | 34  | 60,7 | 0,001   | 11,70 | 15,03-145,6 |
| 2  | Less                  | 14                 | 31,1  | 8    | 53,3 | 22  | 39,3 |         |       |             |
|  | Total                 | 45                 | 80,35 | 11   | 24,4 | 56  | 100  |         |       |             |

**Table 5 Results of Multivariate Analysis**

| Variable                | P value      | XP (B)       | CI 95 %            |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Student Understanding   | 0,001        | 10,73        | 15,03-145,6        |
| <b>Student Attitude</b> | <b>0,000</b> | <b>13,52</b> | <b>17,03-153,7</b> |

Source: Primary Data (Processed, 2024)

## Discussion

The problem of stunting is indeed a serious problem that has reached all levels of society, both parents, adolescents and children, so it is very difficult to control it without the participation of all levels of society, including students as the next generation of the nation. Cities and villages, crowded places and even educational institutions are targeted for commercial information delivery to market food products that do not necessarily meet health requirements. For this reason, it is very necessary to understand and have an attitude that can really support every program launched by the government in an effort to alleviate the problem of stunting emergencies throughout Indonesia in general and in South Aceh in particular.

Aceh is currently ranked third after East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Sulawesi with the highest number of stunting out of 34 provinces throughout Indonesia, it is not impossible that this ranking will increase to be even bigger, the challenges ahead, especially increasing prevention efforts through providing information and understanding to the community, especially mothers-to-be (Women of Childbearing Age) are very important. Women of Childbearing Age is the main milestone in the struggle to alleviate stunting because healthy babies are born to healthy mothers, meet nutritional needs during pregnancy, after birth (1000 HPK) and during the age of toddlers, this becomes easy if the understanding of the importance of policies on stunting alleviation reaches the community in general and nursing students are an extension of the government as the next generation of the nation to be at the forefront of filling and convey correct information to the public.

The understanding of final year students about the stunting emergency is important as one of the efforts to prepare their attitude to support the government program in any form towards stunting alleviation. Considering that they are an extension of the government that will enter the community after completing education, it is necessary to understand that stunting is a common human crisis around the world, including Indonesia. The existence of drugs produces a lot of adverse effects such as widening social gaps in society, damaging physical health, worsening the nation's economic condition and having an impact on the mental weakness of the younger generation.

For this reason, collective, structured and massive awareness is needed to restore the future of the nation's children and the people of Indonesia. The ideal of a prosperous, just and prosperous state as outlined in the constitution can only be achieved if people can live a healthy life both physically and mentally, from the womb, birth and until old age. This is inseparable from the fulfillment of good nutrition from the womb to adulthood.

## CONCLUSION

The end of the analysis shows that it is important to increase public understanding of stunting emergencies through the role of final year students who will enter the community so that they have the provision of understanding and attitudes that support local government programs in efforts to alleviate stunting in the community.



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