

# Parents' Understanding Of Children At Risk Of Stunting (Case Study of RW 03 Karangbesuki Village, Sukun District, Malang City)

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## Abstract

The aim of the research is to find out and describe parents' understanding of stunting, provide parents with understanding about stunting, and the response given by parents after getting an understanding of stunting from posyandu cadres. This research uses qualitative research with a case study approach. The data collection techniques used in this research are interviews, observation and documentation. Based on research that has been conducted, the research results obtained are that almost all parents have sufficient understanding about stunting, especially parents who have children at risk of stunting. Providing this understanding is carried out by posyandu cadres during the implementation of posyandu activities, by providing outreach and counseling to parents who have children at risk of stunting, routine supplementary food (PMT) is given to children at risk of stunting, and the response given by parents after gaining understanding is also very good, almost the majority of parents already understand and are starting to be aware of stunting and its dangers to children's health in the long term.

**Keywords:** Parental understanding, Stunting

## 1. Introduction

Stunting is a nutritional problem faced by almost all countries in the world, especially poor and developing countries. Stunting is a condition of malnutrition that is related to insufficient nutritional intake in the long term, causing chronic nutritional problems (Sutarto et al., 2018). In short, stunting is a child's growth and development condition which is usually seen from the child's height which is below the standard for children his age or is below the growth curve according to age. However, it is not uncommon for many people to think that short stature in children is a genetic factor that has nothing to do with health problems. In fact, genetic factors have a very small influence on a person's growth and development compared to environmental and health factors.

Stunting usually occurs when the child is in the womb and will become visible when the child turns two years old. Some of the symptoms of stunting that commonly occur include a child's weight and height being smaller than children his age, having poor focus and learning memory, and slow body and tooth growth. This was proven in a prospective cohort study in Jamaica, which was conducted in the 9-24 month age group, followed by their psychological development at the age of 17 years. The results showed that teenagers who experienced stunting had higher levels of anxiety, depression, and had lower self-esteem. low compared to teenagers in general (Partner, 2015).

According to basic health research data (Riskesdas) in 2018, Indonesia is ranked fifth in the world with the highest stunting rate (Nirmalasari, 2020). This is of course still a matter of homework for both the government and health workers. Reducing the stunting rate is one of the 2020-2024 National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) programs, where one of the seven agendas is increasing quality and competitive human resources. With quality human resources, it is hoped that the stunting rate can be reduced. All District/City villages in Indonesia are priority targets for gradual reduction in stunting in 2020-2024.

Understanding is a process that consists of the ability to explain and interpret something, being able to provide examples, descriptions and broader and adequate explanations and being able to provide more creative explanations and explanations. (Mawaddah & Maryanti, 2016). This understanding has a higher level than knowledge, which means that understanding is not just knowing, but also wanting someone to learn to be able to utilize or apply what has been learned and understood.

Parents are a family component consisting of a father and mother who are the result of a legal marriage bond and can form a family (Ruli, 2020). Parents are the main responsible for both children's education and health. In this case, parents must be responsible for their child's health from the time they are in the womb until they grow up. Health care is provided from the womb until the first 1000 days of birth or 2 years of age, this is useful as an effort to prevent stunting in children.

Efforts to prevent stunting are carried out from the smallest unit in society, namely the family. This is because the family is an asset for future development that needs to be maintained, improved and protected (Nunun Nurhajati, 2015). Parents' understanding of stunting is very necessary to prevent cases of stunting in children. Socialization and counseling must continue to be carried out for parents, prospective mothers and prospective brides and grooms.

One of the villages in Sukun District, Malang City is Karangbesuki Village. This sub-district is one of the sub-districts that is aware of the dangers of stunting for children, especially in RW 03. Even though there are no stunted children in this sub-district, there are several children at risk of stunting. One way to deal with this problem is to provide animal protein such as eggs. Apart from that, once a month socialization and counseling is carried out by cadres at posyandu for children at risk of stunting and additional food (PMT) is provided at each posyandu for children at risk of stunting. This research was carried out with the aim of finding out parents' understanding of stunting, knowing how to provide understanding to parents about stunting in RW 03, Karangbesuki Village, and knowing the response given by parents after getting an understanding of stunting, especially parents who have children at risk of stunting.

## **2. Method**

This research uses qualitative research with a case study approach. The aim is for the research carried out to obtain accurate and comprehensive results. The location of this research is RW 03 Karangbesuki Village, Malang City. This research was conducted in March 2024 to June 2024, using data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews and documentation. In this research, the presence of researchers in the field is very necessary to observe directly and validate the research results obtained from several data collection techniques.

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1 Result

The research results show that there are three research findings that are in accordance with the research objectives related to parents' understanding of children who are at risk of stunting. The results of this research include:

##### Parents' Understanding of Stunting

Stunting is usually characterized by a child's short body which is not appropriate for children his age. However, the public opinion that is still ingrained to this day is that short stature in children is a genetic trait that comes from the family.

Lack of understanding about stunting, especially among parents, causes stunting cases to increase because parents do not understand how to handle and prevent stunting cases. For this reason, socialization and education regarding stunting is being held with the aim of providing understanding to the public, especially parents, regarding stunting and its dangers to children's health. After being given an understanding, at least parents have a little knowledge about stunting.

Parents already know enough even though they cannot define exactly what stunting is. However, at least through a little understanding of stunting that parents have, it is hoped that parents will be more able to pay attention to the condition of their child's growth and development and not take the condition of short stature that occurs in children lightly.

Apart from just knowing the definition of stunting, parents are also expected to be able to understand and know about the early symptoms of stunting that might occur in children. This aims to ensure that from the start parents can be responsive in recognizing the symptoms of stunting and can immediately treat and overcome the condition of their children who have symptoms of stunting.

It can be concluded that parents are starting to have an understanding of stunting. In this way, preventing and reducing the risk of stunting will be easier to do. Parents can take their children to the posyandu more often to monitor their child's growth and development every month. Later, the child's growth and development process can be seen through a card towards health (KMS) which can be seen by the child.

##### Providing Understanding to Parents Regarding Stunting

Providing understanding to parents about stunting, especially parents who have children at risk of stunting, is carried out by posyandu cadres in various ways. One of the most important ways to do this is the use of language. By choosing to use language that is smooth, non-offensive and choosing words that are easy to understand, parents can more easily accept and digest the information about stunting and their child's condition explained by the cadres.

Not only does it use smooth and easy to understand language, providing understanding to parents must also use data related to child growth and development such as weight and height development as support in providing understanding to parents.

Providing understanding to parents is usually carried out at the posyandu at a special table provided by the posyandu specifically to provide outreach and counseling to parents regarding stunting. This table is devoted to outreach regarding stunting, such as providing parents with an understanding of what stunting is, the dangers it poses to children's long-term health, and how to prevent it. Apart from that, at the table the cadres also provided knowledge about nutritious food that children should consume in order to return the child to their original condition as a child who is free from the risk of stunting.

Apart from providing socialization and counseling, children receive assistance with nutritious food which is usually called PMT (supplementary food provision). This additional food is given to children after socialization in the hope that it can help increase children's nutrition, and also give parents ideas about nutritious food that should be given to children.

Parents' Responses After Gaining Understanding About Stunting, Especially Parents Who Have Children at Risk of Stunting.

After gaining an understanding of stunting from posyandu cadres, the responses given by parents varied, some perhaps did not accept it because they thought their child was healthy and there was no risk of stunting. However, most parents are happy and feel very helped by providing this understanding. Parents become more aware of the condition of stunted children and are more protective and pay more attention to the condition of the child's growth and development.

Providing understanding from these cadres has been proven to increase the knowledge of parents, especially parents who do not know or are not aware of the risk of stunting in children. Parents pay more attention and are more selective in providing food consumed by children, especially when the child is in the growth and development phase. In this phase, the child's appetite is unstable, sometimes going up, sometimes going down. For this reason, parents must be more creative in providing a variety of food ideas so that they can attract children's interest in eating the food they are given. This is because providing nutritious food greatly influences the child's growth and development process.

The parenting style provided by parents also has a huge influence on the risk of stunting in children. This is proven by the food given to children. Parents who do not understand their child's condition will provide food according to their child's wishes, assuming that the important thing is that the child eats and fills his stomach without thinking about the child's nutritional needs and the nutritional content contained in the food and drinks consumed by the child.

The good response given by parents in the process of providing this understanding can be a positive value. Due to the better knowledge that parents have, parents can be more careful and look after the condition of themselves and their children so that they can avoid stunting. Apart from that, providing this understanding can also increase parents' awareness to routinely bring and check their children's growth and development every month to the posyandu. In this way, the stunting rate in Indonesia, especially in Malang City, can quickly decrease, and there will be no more stunting cases.

### **3.2 Discussion**

Stunting is a condition of chronic malnutrition that occurs during critical periods of the growth and development process starting from the fetus (Ramdhani et al., 2020). Usually the condition of a stunted child is characterized by the child's height being shorter than the age standard. However, the condition of children whose height is below average does not necessarily mean they are malnourished, it could be due to genetic factors or family inheritance. In addition, the development of children affected by stunting usually experiences significant growth delays. Meanwhile, on the other hand, healthy children generally do not experience developmental delays even though they have short stature.

#### **Parents' Understanding of Stunting**

Parents' understanding of stunting is very necessary to reduce and prevent the risk of stunting. Because parents who have sufficient knowledge about stunting can reduce the risk of children being stunted when compared to parents who have low knowledge. This is proven by the results of Septamarini's research in the Journal of Nutrition College in 2019 which said that parents with low knowledge had a 10.2 times greater risk of children experiencing stunting compared to mothers who had sufficient knowledge (Ramdhani et al., 2020). The poor knowledge of parents about stunting is due to a lack of information from the surrounding environment or parents not caring about stunting cases, other causes are also due to parents' lack of awareness of their children's growth and development conditions and lack of awareness of taking their children to the posyandu every month to monitor their growth conditions. child flower.

Parents' understanding of stunting has nothing to do with parental education. Parents with low education do not guarantee that they will not know anything about stunting and their children's nutritional needs. Another factor that can influence the provision of understanding to parents is age, where the older the parents are, the more mature they will have a mindset and experience (Wulandini et al., 2020). The final factor that can influence the provision of understanding to parents is the environment, where a person can understand and learn new things depending on the nature of the group (Ramdhani et al., 2020). The better the environment, the easier the understanding process will be.

#### **Providing Understanding to Parents Regarding Stunting**

Providing parents with understanding about stunting can be done in various ways, starting from using smooth and easy to understand language when conveying information about stunting, conducting outreach and counseling to parents, and providing assistance in the form of PMT (providing additional food) as assistance to meet children's nutritional needs. Apart from PMT, other assistance that is usually provided is eggs, because eggs are an animal protein that is easily available at an affordable price.

Providing understanding to parents using smooth and easy to understand language makes it easier for parents to capture and understand the information conveyed by posyandu cadres. The technique used is usually called the omission technique. Liliweri (2007) states that this omission technique is a simple strategy for conveying critical messages in order to avoid deficiencies or weaknesses that are informed (Maielayuskha & Ardiyansyah, 2021). This aims

to ensure that no one feels offended by what the cadres say and that parents can immediately understand and accept the explanation given by the cadres.

Providing further understanding can be done by holding socialization and counseling activities for parents at the posyandu carried out by cadres or community health center employees. This socialization and counseling activity has been proven to increase knowledge and awareness of parents' attitudes and actions to monitor their own health conditions from an early age so that it does not have an impact on the child's condition in the future. Mothers' poor knowledge about stunting causes the child's risk of stunting to become greater. This is proven from the results of research conducted by (Wulandini et al., 2020). Regarding the description of the knowledge of mothers who have toddlers about stunting at the Rejosari Community Health Center, Tenayan Raya District, Pekanbaru City, it was stated that the majority of mothers' knowledge regarding stunting at the Community Health Center was lacking. This is due to parents' lack of knowledge about stunting and several other influencing factors, namely education and age.

Providing additional food (PMT) aims to ensure that children always get all the types of nutrients that children need in appropriate amounts so that weight loss does not occur and can help fulfill children's good nutritional status. (Wati, 2020). This also provides parents with an understanding that the nutritious food given to children does not always have to be expensive, parents can come up with more creative and innovative food ideas so that they are more interesting and their children like them and most importantly, pay attention to the nutritional content contained in the food. as well as implementing balanced nutrition guidelines.

### **Parents' Responses After Gaining Understanding About Stunting, Especially Parents Who Have Children at Risk of Stunting**

The responses given by parents after gaining an understanding of stunting, especially parents who have children at risk of stunting, are very diverse. After learning about the condition of children who have risk factors for stunting, initially not all parents understand and accept their child's condition. However, after gaining understanding, almost all parents have begun to understand and accept their child's condition and are trying to restore their child's condition so that they are free from the risk of stunting. Parents become more aware and pay attention to their children's condition and cleanliness. Apart from that, the additional food (PMT) that cadres routinely provide at each posyandu is also well received by parents as assistance for their children's health.

Some may not accept the diagnosis. However, many parents accept that their children are at risk of stunting. Parents are aware that there may be errors in their child's parenting style or the parents' health condition during pregnancy. Various parenting patterns will have an impact on children's nutrition (Zulfa et al., 2024). Poor parenting patterns, especially in the behavior and practices of feeding children, will greatly affect the quality of nutrition that children receive. Apart from that, maternal factors during adolescence and pregnancy are lacking in nutrition and poor lactation can also be one of the triggers that cause children to be at risk of stunting.

The good response given by parents in providing this understanding is one of the keys to success in increasing parents' knowledge about stunting. Apart from that, the good response given makes parents know more and are more aware about stunting. The good response given

by parents during the process of providing parental understanding and awareness can support the return of the child to a stunting-free child

#### 4. Conclusion

Parents' understanding of stunting is very good, parents already know the definition of stunting and the symptoms shown if a child is indicated to be stunted. Apart from providing understanding at the posyandu, great curiosity makes parents find out and understand for themselves what stunting is.

Providing understanding to parents can be done in various ways, including: approaching parents using smooth and easy to understand language, next is providing understanding by conducting outreach and counseling about stunting, and the last is providing additional food (PMT).

The response given by parents when providing understanding by cadres was very good. Parents pay more attention and digest what the cadres say, because they realize that there are errors in their parenting patterns that put their children at risk of stunting. By providing this understanding, parents are more aware and pay more attention to the child's growth and development conditions and carry out various recommended methods to restore the child's condition so that he becomes a child who is free of stunting.

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