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Mothers' Knowledge on Toddler Nutritional Status at the Integrated Health Post

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ABSTRACT/ ABSTRAK

ABSTRACT. *Nutritional status is defined as the balance between nutrient intake and the body's nutritional needs. The nutritional status of toddlers is influenced by several direct and indirect factors. Direct factors include toddler food intake and infectious diseases, while indirect factors consist of socioeconomic conditions and limited family knowledge, particularly among mothers, regarding toddler nutritional status. This study aimed to describe mothers' knowledge on toddler nutritional status at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post in Karang Anyar Village, within the working area of the Karang Rejo Public Health Center. This was a descriptive study using a total sampling technique, with 55 respondents selected. Data were collected using a questionnaire that covered respondent characteristics and knowledge-related questions. The results showed that 17 respondents (30.9%) had a good level of knowledge, 32 respondents (58.2%) had a sufficient level, and 6 respondents (10.9%) had a poor level of knowledge. It can be concluded that most mothers had a sufficient level of knowledge regarding toddler nutritional status at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post in the Karang Rejo Public Health Center working area, with 32 respondents (58.2%) falling into this category.*

Kata kunci:

Pengetahuan, Ibu, Status Gizi

ABSTRAK. status gizi adalah keseimbangan antara asupan dan kebutuhan nutrisi tubuh. Masalah status gizi pada balita dipengaruhi oleh beberapa faktor langsung dan tidak langsung. Faktor penyebab langsung dipengaruhi oleh makanan balita dan penyakit infeksi, sedangkan faktor tidak langsung diantaranya adalah sosial ekonomi dan terbatasnya pengetahuan keluarga terutama ibu mengenai status gizi pada balita balita.Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui gambaran tingkat pengetahuan ibu terhadap status gizi pada balita di posyandu pelita 2 kelurahan karang anyar wilayah kerja Puskesmas Karang Rejo. Metode penelitian ini menggunakan metode penelitian deskriptif dengan penarikan sampel menggunakan *total sampling* didapatkan hasil sampel sebanyak 55 responden. Pengumpulan data menggunakan kuesioner yang terdiri dari karakteristik responden dan tingkat pengetahuan ibu tentang status gizi pada balita. Hasil karakteristik responden berdasarkan tingkat pengetahuan didapatkan hasil tingkat pengetahuan kategori baik 17 (30,9%) responden, kategori cukup sebanyak 32 (58,2%) responden, dan kategori kurang 6 (10,9%) responden. Kesimpulan dari hasil penelitian sebagian besar pengetahuan ibu tentang status gizi pada balita di posyandu pelita 2 wilayah kerja Puskesmas karang rejo dengan kategori cukup sebanyak 32 (58,2 %) responden.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowledge, or cognition, is a crucial aspect that significantly influences the formation of behavior. In this context, mothers' knowledge about nutrition is one of the contributing factors to the high prevalence of undernutrition among toddlers (Yuhansyah, 2019). Nutritional status can influence the occurrence of nutritional problems, and such problems can affect individuals across all age groups (Muchtar et al., 2022). Achieving optimal nutritional status depends on balanced food intake that meets the body's needs, which in turn supports growth and development, productivity, and overall health status (Septiawati et al., 2021).

According to global data from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), there are 148.1 million toddlers who are too short for their age (stunting), 45.0 million toddlers who are too thin for their height (wasting), and 37.0 million toddlers who are too heavy for their height (overweight). The Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (SSGI, 2022) reported an increase in wasting among toddlers compared to 2021, rising from 7.1% to 7.7%. The prevalence of overweight in toddlers was 3.5%, stunting was 21.6%, and underweight was 17.1%. In North Kalimantan, based on SSGI 2022 data, the stunting rate among toddlers was 22.1%, wasting 6.5%, underweight 17.3%, and overweight 3.5%. In Bulungan Regency, the data showed stunting at 18.9%, wasting at 6.7%, underweight at 15.7%, and overweight at 2.3% (Ministry of Health, Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

Nutritional status is the balance between nutrient intake and the body's nutritional needs. Changes in toddler nutritional status with adequate intake can lead to normal conditions. In contrast, the inability to meet nutritional needs may be influenced by low economic conditions. Therefore, family income determines the purchasing power for nutritious food intake (Aziza and Mil, 2021).

Nutritional status problems among toddlers are influenced by several direct and indirect factors. Direct causes are related to toddler food intake and infectious diseases, while indirect causes include socioeconomic conditions and limited family knowledge, especially among mothers, regarding toddler nutritional status. Most families only understand that toddlers should be given food in the same way as adults on a daily basis (Yuhansyah, 2019).

Nutritional knowledge refers to the ability to choose foods that are sources of nutrients and the skill to select healthy snacks. Low nutritional knowledge is a contributing factor to the emergence of nutritional problems, changes in dietary habits, and the reduced consumption of nutritious food during adolescence (Notoadmodjo, 2019).

According to Ghulam, as cited in Kanah (2020), nutritional status is influenced not only by health status, knowledge, economic conditions, environment, and culture but also by patterns of energy and protein consumption. A preliminary study conducted at the Salimbatu Public Health Center in Bulungan City on toddler nutritional status found that 34 toddlers experienced undernutrition. It was also found that 6 out of 10 mothers who visited the health center were unaware of toddler nutritional status.

A study conducted by Yuhansa and Mira (2019), titled "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge on Toddler Nutrition at the Remaja Public Health Center in Samarinda City," revealed that most mothers had a sufficient level of knowledge regarding toddler nutrition. Similarly, a study by Shari (2023), titled "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge on Toddler

Nutrition," showed that most mothers had low knowledge levels. Another study by Usman et al. (2024), titled "Overview of Mothers' Knowledge on Toddler Nutrition at the Batua Public Health Center, Manggala District, Makassar City," also found that the majority of mothers had a low level of knowledge regarding toddler nutrition.

Based on existing data and previous studies, it is evident that many mothers still have only a sufficient level of knowledge about toddler nutritional status. Therefore, further observation is needed to explore "An Overview of Mothers' Knowledge on Toddler Nutritional Status at the Salimbatu Public Health Center, Bulungan Regency".

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive research design. The sampling technique used was total sampling, with a total of 55 respondents. The research was conducted at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post, located in Karang Anyar Village, within the working area of the Karang Rejo Public Health Center, Tarakan City. Data were collected using a questionnaire that covered demographic characteristics of the respondents and questions regarding mothers' knowledge of toddler nutritional status. The questionnaire was based on the Guttman scale. It consisted of 10 questions, and the resulting data were nominal. Positive answers were scored as 1, and negative answers as 0. This questionnaire was adapted from a previous study conducted by Wulandari (2022), which had been tested for validity and reliability, resulting in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.627. Data analysis in this study used univariate analysis. Univariate analysis is an analysis of a single variable and can be presented in the form of frequency distributions.

RESULTS

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Age at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post, Karang Anyar Village, Karang Rejo Public Health Center Working Area (N = 55)

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
15-25 years	5	9,1
26-35 years	41	74,5
36-45 years	9	16,4
Total	**55**	**100,0**

Based on the table above, the age characteristics of the respondents show that 5 respondents (9.1%) were aged 15–25 years, 41 respondents (74.5%) were aged 26–35 years, and 9 respondents (16.4%) were aged 36–45 years.

Table 2. Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Education at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post, Karang Anyar Village, Karang Rejo Public Health Center Working Area (N = 55)

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Elementary School	9	16,4
Junior High School	16	29,1
Senior High School	27	49,1
Higher Education	3	5,45
Total	**55**	**100,0**

Based on the table above, the educational characteristics of the respondents show that 9 respondents (16.4%) had completed elementary school, 16 respondents (29.1%) junior high school, 27 respondents (49.1%) senior high school, and 3 respondents (5.45%) had higher education.

Table 3. Frequency Distribution of Respondents Based on Knowledge Level at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post, Karang Anyar Village, Karang Rejo Public Health Center Working Area (N = 55)

Knowledge Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Good	17	30,9
Sufficient	32	58,2
Poor	6	10,9
Total	**55**	**100,0**

Based on the table above, the knowledge level of mothers with toddlers regarding toddler nutritional status shows that 17 respondents (30.9%) had a good level of knowledge, 32 respondents (58.2%) had a sufficient level, and 6 respondents (10.9%) had a poor level of knowledge.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, it was found that 17 mothers (30.9%) had a good level of knowledge regarding toddler nutritional status. This was evident from the questionnaire results, with the highest frequency of respondents, totaling 17 (30.9%), falling into the good knowledge category. These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Ardian (2024) titled "Mothers' Knowledge on Nutrition and Toddler Nutritional Status," which showed that 45 out of 61 respondents (73.6%) had a good level of knowledge. The results of that study also placed the majority of respondents in the good category, which may be attributed to the fact that most of the mothers had completed senior high school education.

Knowledge is the entirety of ideas, thoughts, concepts, and understanding that humans possess about the world and everything in it, including human life. Meanwhile, science refers to a system of knowledge that has been obtained through systematic study. Knowledge tends to be spontaneous in nature, while science is more systematic and reflective (Soelaiman, 2019). One of the important factors influencing toddler nutritional status is the level of mothers' knowledge regarding toddler nutrition. A lack of understanding among mothers about the variety of ingredients and types of food may disrupt toddlers' growth and development, particularly brain development. Therefore, it is essential for mothers to provide their children with nutritious food. Many parents, especially mothers, still fail to pay sufficient attention to their toddlers' nutritional intake.

These findings are in line with a study by Andriany, Ahmar, and Sianturi (2025), which emphasized that low maternal knowledge about nutrition—particularly regarding balanced diets, exclusive breastfeeding, and appropriate complementary feeding—is a key factor contributing to the high prevalence of stunting. The study highlighted that limited maternal understanding of proper nutritional intake can hinder optimal child growth and development. Therefore, improving nutritional education for mothers, especially through community-based approaches, is a strategic step toward reducing stunting rates and sustainably improving toddlers' nutritional status.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study conducted among mothers with toddlers at the Pelita 2 Integrated Health Post, Karang Anyar Village, within the working area of the Karang Rejo Public Health Center, it can be concluded that the majority of respondents were aged 26–35 years, totaling 41 individuals. In terms of education, most respondents had completed senior high school, with 27 individuals. Regarding knowledge level, 17 mothers were classified in the good category concerning toddler nutritional status. The researcher hopes that through this study, mothers will gain a better understanding of toddler nutritional status.

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