



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### CORRELATION OF THE ROLE OF HEALTH CADRES TO STUNTING EMERGENCY PREVENTION EFFORTS IN THE WORKING AREA OF THE LHOK BENGKUANG TAPAKTUAN HEALTH CENTER SOUTH ACEH

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#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Imoptimal brain development and inhibited mental and motor growth are one of the impacts of stunting, not only that stunting can also increase the risk of illness and death for toddlers, in relation to that, the incidence of stunting is very necessary to be prevented, so the role of parties who can routinely accompany and remind mothers of toddlers to prevent stunting occurs. The role of a cadre is very necessary because cadres are the first parties who come into direct contact with the community, especially mothers under five. **The purpose** of this study is to find out how the role of a health cadre in stunting prevention efforts in children under five yearsold. **Methods:** This study is a type of quantitative research with an analytical survey design and a cross sectional approach. Sampling was done using a purposive sampling technique by distributing a questionnaire as an instrument and analysis was carried out with a chi square test. The sample in this study is a health cadre who specifically handles toddlers who work in the working area of the Lhok Bengkuang Health Center, South Aceh Regency as many as 34 people, the questionnaire contains data on education, motivation, knowledge, facilities owned by cadres play an important role in the efforts of health cadres to prevent stunting and training that has been obtained as an effort to prevent stunting. **Results:** The results of the bivariate analysis showed that there was a meaningful relationship between the role of health cadres and stunting prevention efforts  $P<0.005$ . **Conclusion and suggestions:** It is necessary to increase the role of health cadres to detect stunting rates early in the community, so that prevention efforts can be carried out earlier.

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## INTRODUCTION

The incidence of stunting occurs in developing and poor countries, therefore stunting is a big problem and is faced by the world because of the impact of stunting which results in non-optimal brain development (Wardita et al., 2021). Chronic Malnutrition in children (stunting) is a problem faced by the world, there are many factors that cause stunting, one of which is due to the lack of nutritional intake which can be caused by a lack of information and education which results in malnutrition and finally the process of physical development becomes disrupted so that it is not in accordance with the stages of development, so that children become too short of their age (Yunitasari et al., 2021). Indonesian Basic Health Research (Riskesdas) conducted in 2021 revealed that 24.4 percent of children experienced short bodies, or stunting, and 7.1 percent experienced thin bodies or wasting (Data and Information Center of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). Budi Gunadi Sadikin said that the results of the 2022 Indonesian Nutrition Status Survey (SSGI) showed that the stunting rate fell from 26.92% in 2020, 24.4% in 2021 to 21.6% in 2022. Although there has been a decrease in the incidence of stunting, the figure is still relatively high from the government's target figure of 14% in 2024. South Aceh Regency has

been designated as the focus location for stunting in 2022. From the results of the 2021 Indonesian Nutrition Status Study (SSGI) in South Aceh, 27.3 percent of under-five are stunted, ranked 18th out of 23 districts. Stunting or short is a condition of failing to grow in children under five due to chronic malnutrition, especially at 1,000 HPK so that children are too short for their age. This condition is caused by the occurrence of chronic malnutrition that occurs for a long time. Children must continue to grow into teenagers because adolescence is a transitional period from child to adult where very rapid physical, mental and emotional growth occurs. 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 phase of pregnant women or before childbirth and the phase after childbirth, mainly in babies aged 0-24 months. We pursue these two phases, because this phase is the highest determinant of stunting. The cause of high stunting is in these phases. Of the 11 intervention programs, one of them is education, education, and promotion programs that cover both phases of growth. Meanwhile, the other 10 interventions focused on each phase of life which has the highest determinant of stunting. The intervention was 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 transitional period from child to adult where very rapid physical, mental and emotional growth occurs. Therefore, it is important to consume foods that contain nutrients for the growth and development process. Adolescent girls who consume enough nutritious food will maintain their reproductive health, so that they will become healthy mother-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 in Aceh (Aceh Health Office, 2022). There is a suspicion of low exclusive breastfeeding for toddlers (0-59 months), in addition to that breastfeeding is not given perfectly by mothers, the unemployment factor that is still high has a difficult impact on meeting daily needs so that toddlers lack important intake such as animal and vegetable proteins and also iron which triggers the high incidence of stunting. In areas with high poverty, undernourished toddlers are often found 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 a result of malnutrition in toddlers in Indonesia exceeds the limit set by WHO. Stunting cases are often found in areas with high poverty and low levels of education. Concerns about the impact of stunting are conditions when toddlers have a lower than average height. This is due to the nutritional intake given, 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 disease attacks such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity. The main causes of stunting include insufficient nutritional and nutritional intake for children's needs, wrong parenting due to lack of knowledge and education for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, poor sanitation of the living environment such as lack of clean water facilities and the lack of adequate toilet facilities as well as limited access to health facilities needed for pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and toddlers. Provincially, judging from the data of 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 large number of stunting cases that occur in Indonesia encourages the government to provide special directions contained in Presidential Regulation Number 72 of 2021 concerning the Acceleration of Stunting Reduction. The Aceh Government has formed a Stunting Reduction Acceleration Team (TPPS) in Aceh Province. One of the fields in the TPPS team is the Behavioral Change Communication and Family Assistance Division, 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 stated that efforts to prevent and handle stunting can be carried out if the knowledge of posyandu cadres related to stunting conditions is good, so that it can be concluded that a person's level of education will determine the ease of the person to understand and implement information related to the knowledge about nutrition that they have received (Rahayu et al., 2018). The results of another study stated that most of the health cadres assigned to be cadres under five had high motivation for their role in stunting prevention efforts. The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between motivation and the role of cadres in stunting prevention efforts. Good cadre knowledge will give rise to motivation to support a mother to provide balanced nutrition to her toddlers (Nurhasanah, 2019).

Considering that Aceh is currently ranked third after East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) and West Sulawesi with the highest number of stunting from 34 provinces throughout Indonesia, it is not impossible that this ranking increases to even bigger, the challenges ahead, especially increasing prevention efforts through providing information and understanding to the community, especially prospective mothers (Women of Fertile Age) are very important. Women of Childbearing Age are the main milestone in the struggle to alleviate stunting because healthy babies are born to healthy mothers, meet nutritional needs during the womb, 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 it is necessary to conduct research related to the role of health cadres as an effort to increase support for government programs in reducing/preventing stunting with the title "The Role of Health Cadres in Stunting Emergency Prevention Efforts in the Working Area of the LhokBengkuang Health Center, Tapaktuan, South Aceh".

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

This type of research is an analytical survey with an approach *cross-sectional*. The population is health cadres in the working area of the LhokBengkuang health center, Tapaktuan, South Aceh, in 2025 which amounts to 34 people (Based on the initial survey), with the technique *Total sampling* Where all health cadres are used as research samples. The instruments in this study consist of; Questionnaires and academic grades. Primary data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires related to the understanding and attitude of health cadres towards stunting alleviation programs. Secondary data was obtained through posyandu and pustkesmas data to find out the picture of stunting in the work area concerned and other supporting data. The data obtained in this study was processed using the Chi-Square statistical test with a degree of significance ( $\alpha$ ) =5%.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, the following data were obtained: Health cadres with educational background, the majority of high school graduates (85.7%), have worked as cadres for more than one year (89.3%), and the majority age is less than 20 years old (60.7%). The results of the research on the understanding of cadres related to stunting showed a good category (76%), while the results of the research related to the attitude of health cadres to support government programs in an effort to alleviate stunting were in the good category (73.2%). Based on the results of the bivariate analysis, it was shown that there was a meaningful relationship between the understanding and attitude of health cadres with a P: 0.001 value (OR: 11.70 and 95% CI: 15.03-145.6). Meanwhile, the results of the multivariate analysis showed that the attitude of health cadres had a greater influence than the understanding of cadres in supporting government programs with a P: 0.000 value (Exp B: 13.52 and CI 95%: 17.03-153.7). 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 the delivery of commercial information to market food products that do not necessarily meet health requirements. For this reason, it is very necessary to understand and 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 increases to even bigger, the challenges ahead, especially increasing prevention efforts through providing information and understanding to the community,

especially prospective mothers (women of childbearing age) are very important. Women of childbearing age are the main milestones in the struggle to alleviate stunting because healthy babies are born to healthy mothers, meet nutritional needs during the womb, 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 health cadres are the people closest to the community and become an extension of the government as the next generation of the nation. To be at the forefront of filling and conveying correct information to the public. The understanding of end-level health cadres about stunting emergencies is important as one of the efforts to prepare their attitude to support government programs in any form of stunting alleviation. Considering that they are an extension of the government that is always close to the community after completing good health education, it is necessary to understand that stunting is a common human crisis around the world, including Indonesia. The existence of stunting produces many adverse effects such as widening social disparities 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, a collective, structured and massive awareness is needed to restore the future of the nation's children and the people of Indonesia. The ideals 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 to old age. This is inseparable from the fulfillment of good nutrition from the womb to adulthood.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The end of the analysis shows that it is important to increase public understanding of stunting emergencies through the role of health cadres who are always close to the community so that they have the provision of understanding and attitudes that support local government programs in an effort to alleviate stunting in the community. There is a need for cross-sectoral cooperation efforts and local governments in an effort to increase public understanding in improving the degree of public health and efforts to educate the nation's life, one of which is through strengthening policies on stunting eradication and prevention. It is necessary to increase understanding, roles and attitudes for health cadres. It is necessary to increase public awareness regarding the importance of PHBS. Need to increase cross-programme and cross-sectoral cooperation.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To maximize the role of health cadres in supporting local government programs to alleviate stunting in South Aceh, it is necessary to carry out training/simulations, health counseling and cooperation and coordination with cross-program sectors such as the Health Office, Health Education Institutions, the Community and all related parties to achieve the goals of the South Aceh district government program.

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