

The Influence of Complementary Feeding Education by Midwives on the Variation of Complementary Feeding in Infants

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ABSTRACT

Complementary feeding (MP-ASI) is essential for supporting infant growth and development. However, inappropriate complementary feeding practices remain common due to mothers' limited knowledge. Education provided by health workers, particularly midwives, is expected to improve maternal knowledge and promote more diverse complementary feeding practices. This study aimed to examine the effect of complementary feeding education by midwives on the diversity of complementary feeding among infants. A quantitative pre-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design was conducted at Air Dingin Health Center, Padang. Thirty mothers with infants aged 6–12 months were selected using purposive sampling based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data were collected through pretest and posttest questionnaires before and after health education. Maternal knowledge was assessed using structured questionnaires, while complementary feeding diversity was evaluated following the intervention. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired t-tests with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. Before the intervention, 60% of mothers had low knowledge, 30% moderate, and 10% good knowledge. After education, 50% demonstrated good knowledge, 40% moderate, and 10% low knowledge. The proportion of mothers providing diverse complementary foods increased from 30% to 70%. Statistical analysis showed significant improvements in both maternal knowledge and complementary feeding diversity ($p < 0.05$). Midwife-led complementary feeding education effectively enhances maternal knowledge and complementary feeding practices.



Keywords: Education, Complementary Feeding, Variety, Baby

INTRODUCTION

Complementary feeding (MP-ASI) is one of the most important things in the development of babies at an early age. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), exclusive breastfeeding during the first 6 months of life is essential for the baby's health, while complementary feeding is necessary after that age to meet growing nutritional needs (WHO, 2022). However, despite clear guidelines on complementary feeding, many mothers still give complementary feeding not in accordance with the recommendations, which is risky for the baby's growth and development.

Most mothers in Indonesia still do not have adequate knowledge about the types and variations of good MP-ASI. Based on data from Basic Health Research (Riskesmas), about 60% of mothers in Indonesia provide complementary feeding at a younger age than recommended, namely before the age of 6 months, and only a few provide a variety of complementary feeding after that age (Ministry of Health, 2021). A lack of understanding of complementary feeding can lead to babies receiving foods that are not nutritious, which can affect their health in the long run.

In the context of West Sumatra, especially the city of Padang, there is still a high rate of MP-ASI that is not in accordance with the recommendations. Based on data from the Padang City Health Office in 2022, about 50% of babies under one year of age have not received varied complementary foods, while 30% of them have not even received complementary foods at all at the recommended age. This condition shows that there are still many mothers who do not get enough information about the importance of variations in complementary feeding for their babies.

This lack of information contributes to the poor quality of complementary foods given to babies. According to research by Suryani (2022), many mothers only give single-based complementary foods, such as team rice, without paying attention to the nutritional adequacy needed by the baby. In fact, the variety of complementary feeding is very important to ensure that babies get complete and balanced nutrition, including proteins, vitamins, and minerals needed for optimal growth and development (Rochmah, 2022).

The impact of complementary feeding that is not in accordance with the recommendations is very significant. In the short term, babies can experience growth disorders such as stunting or underweight. Research by Nuraini and Rahmawati (2022) shows that the provision of malnourished MP-ASI contributes to high stunting rates in Indonesia. In the long term, children who are malnourished in the first 1000 days of life (HPK) are at high risk of experiencing cognitive and physical development disorders (Dewi, 2021).

One way to increase maternal knowledge about complementary feeding is through education provided by health workers, especially midwives. Education by midwives is expected to provide accurate information about the right time to start complementary feeding and the type of



food that is good and nutritious. Research by Sari and Hadi (2022) shows that mothers who attend counseling on complementary feeding tend to adhere more to guidelines for complementary feeding and are more diverse in choosing food ingredients for complementary feeding.

Counseling on complementary feeding conducted by midwives can overcome this knowledge problem. Midwives have an important role in providing education to pregnant women and postpartum mothers about complementary feeding, as well as monitoring the development of the baby after delivery. In some areas in Indonesia, education provided by midwives has proven effective in improving the knowledge and attitude of mothers towards MP-ASI (Wahyuni, 2021). Therefore, increasing the skills and knowledge of Midwives related to complementary feeding is needed to ensure the success of complementary feeding programs.

However, not all health centers in the regions have a systematic education program on complementary feeding, and this is one of the challenges that needs to be overcome. According to research by Hasanah and Yulia (2021), many health centers are still limited in resources and facilities to provide adequate education to mothers regarding complementary feeding. Therefore, research that focuses on the influence of MP-ASI education by midwives in Puskesmas is very relevant to be carried out.

Puskesmas Anak Air in the city of Padang, West Sumatra, became one example of the right location for this study. This health center has a high number of pregnant women and mothers with babies, but still faces challenges in terms of increasing maternal knowledge about complementary feeding. Based on data from the Air children's Health Center (2022), about 40% of mothers who come to this Health Center still have limited knowledge about complementary feeding. This shows that there are still many mothers who need to get education about complementary feeding.

In addition, although many studies have discussed the importance of complementary feeding education, few have specifically examined the effect of education provided by midwives in health centers on the variety of complementary feeding given to infants. Research conducted by Dewi and Rahayu (2022) in Yogyakarta shows that education provided by midwives can increase maternal knowledge about proper MP-ASI provision, but similar research in West Sumatra is still limited.

One important factor in the success of complementary feeding education is the way of counseling conducted by midwives. Direct, interactive, and structured counseling can improve mothers' understanding of the importance of MP-ASI variation. Research by Amalia (2022) shows that extension methods involving group discussions and live demonstrations are more effective in improving mothers' knowledge and skills compared to one-way extension methods.

The impact of complementary feeding education by midwives is not only limited to increasing maternal knowledge, but also to changing the behavior of complementary feeding to infants. Research by Sari et al. (2022) found that after attending education on complementary feeding, 70% of mothers in the study area began to provide more varied and nutritious complementary feeding. Thus, education by midwives in health centers can be an effective intervention to improve the variety of complementary feeding given to infants.



However, the biggest challenge still faced is the sustainability and consistency of MP-ASI education programs in Puskesmas. Research by Sari (2022) shows that the success of complementary feeding education depends largely on the active and ongoing involvement of Midwives. Therefore, there needs to be support from local governments to ensure that MP-ASI education programs continue to run and can include more mothers.

The urgency of this problem is increasingly clear given the high number of stunting and malnutrition problems that are still a big issue in Indonesia. Based on data from UNICEF (2022), Indonesia still has a stunting prevalence of around 24.4%, which is mostly caused by non-nutritious diets in early childhood. Therefore, increasing the variety of complementary foods is an important step in overcoming this problem. Education about complementary feeding by midwives is very relevant to do given its great contribution to the improvement of infant nutrition.

The authors' interest in this study arose from concerns about the high rate of stunting and nutritional problems in infants in West Sumatra. By involving midwives as the main extension, it is expected that this study can contribute to improving the knowledge and variety of complementary feeding provided by mothers. Thus, this study is not only relevant for academic, but also has great practical implications in improving the quality of life of infants in Indonesia.

METHODS

This study used a quantitative design with a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest approach conducted at the Air Padang children's Health Center. A total of 30 mothers who have babies aged 6-12 months were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, and have given their consent as research respondents (informed consent). Research instruments in the form of structured questionnaires that have been tested for validity using the content validity test and Pearson product moment correlation test, and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha test. The instrument was used to measure the knowledge of mothers about complementary feeding with less, enough, and good categories, and to assess the variation of complementary feeding with varied and non-varied categories.

Data collection was carried out through three stages, namely pretest, intervention, and posttest. Intervention in the form of health education by midwives was carried out in one session with a duration of 30 minutes using interactive lecture and discussion methods, and supported by educational media in the form of leaflets and backsheets on MP-ASI, including material on time of administration, nutritional composition, and examples of food variations. Posttest was conducted after the intervention according to the research schedule, namely one week after education, to assess changes in knowledge and practice of complementary feeding. Data were analyzed univariate to describe the characteristics of respondents and bivariate paired t-test with significance level $p < 0.05$.



RESULTS

1. Frequency Distribution of Maternal Knowledge and Variation of Complementary Feeding Before and After Education

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Maternal Knowledge and Variation of Complementary Feeding Before and After Education

Categories	Before Education	After Education
Mother's Knowledge		
Low	18 mother (60%)	3 Mother (10%)
Enough	9 mother (30%)	12 mothers (40%)
Good	3 Mother (10%)	15 Mother (50%)
Variations of complementary foods given		
Provide Variety	9 mother (30%)	21 mother (70%)
Does Not Provide Variety	21 mother (70%)	9 mother (30%)

The table above shows significant changes in maternal knowledge of complementary feeding and the practice of variation in complementary feeding given to infants before and after education by midwives. Before education, most mothers (60%) had low knowledge of complementary feeding, while only 10% had good knowledge. After education, maternal knowledge increased rapidly, with 50% of mothers having good knowledge and only 10% still having low knowledge. In terms of the variety of complementary feeding, before education, only 30% of mothers gave a variety of complementary feeding, while after education, 70% of mothers began to give a more diverse variety of complementary feeding. This shows that complementary feeding education provided by midwives has succeeded in increasing both maternal knowledge and the diversity of complementary feeding given to infants.

2. Differences in Maternal Knowledge and Variations of Complementary Feeding Before and After Education

Table 2. Differences in Maternal Knowledge And Variations of Complementary Feeding Before and After Education

Variable	Before Education	After Education	P value (Test paired t test)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval
Mother's Knowledge	18 mothers (60%) low,	3 mothers (10%) low	$p < 0,05$	2,45	1,20 – 3,70
Variations MP-ASI	9 mothers (30%) enough	12 mothers (40%) enough	$p < 0,05$	0,75	0,45 – 1,05



The results of the paired t-test showed significant differences in both variables tested: maternal knowledge and variation in complementary feeding given to infants before and after education by midwives. In maternal knowledge, there was an average increase of 2.45 (with a 95% confidence interval between 1.20 – 3.70), indicating that after education, maternal knowledge of complementary feeding increased significantly ($p < 0.05$). In addition, for the variation of complementary feeding, the mean value difference of 0.75 (with a 95% confidence interval between 0.45-1.05) showed that there was a significant increase in the number of mothers who gave the variation of complementary feeding to their infants after education ($p < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

1. Frequency Distribution of Maternal Knowledge and Variation of Complementary Feeding Before and After Education

The paired t-test results showed a significant difference in the two variables tested, namely the mother's knowledge of complementary feeding and the variation of complementary feeding given to infants before and after being given education by midwives. Maternal knowledge is one of the main factors influencing the successful provision of appropriate complementary foods. The paired t-test results showed an average increase in maternal knowledge of 2.45 (with a 95% confidence interval between 1.20 – 3.70). This increase shows that after getting an education, mothers have a much better understanding of how to give proper complementary feeding and in accordance with the recommendations.

A significant decrease in low knowledge and an increase in good knowledge after Education indicate that education provided by midwives is effective in changing mothers' understanding of the importance of nutritious and varied complementary feeding. This is in line with previous research conducted by Suryani (2022), which found that education by health workers can significantly increase mothers' knowledge about complementary feeding. With this increase in knowledge, mothers are expected to provide complementary feeding that is more in line with health guidelines and nutritional needs of infants.

In addition, the results of the paired t-test also showed a significant difference in the practice of variations in complementary feeding given to infants. Before education, most mothers gave complementary feeding with a slight variation, such as rice porridge or tim, which was limited to one or two types of food. However, after being given education by midwives, there was a significant increase in the number of mothers who gave their babies a variety of complementary foods. The mean value of the difference for the variation of complementary feeding was 0.75 (with a 95% confidence interval between 0.45 – 1.05). This shows that education has succeeded in increasing the awareness of mothers about the importance of providing more diverse and nutritious complementary foods.

Increasing the variety of complementary foods is very important to meet the nutritional needs of infants optimally. The variety of foods provided not only helps babies get the various nutrients they need, but also supports healthy growth and development. Research by Dewi (2021)



also shows that variations in complementary feeding can reduce the risk of malnutrition in infants, such as stunting or underweight, which is a major problem in many developing countries, including Indonesia.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that complementary feeding Education conducted by midwives has a very positive impact in increasing knowledge and changing maternal complementary feeding practices. Although maternal knowledge has improved significantly, the next challenge is to ensure that this knowledge is consistently applied in the mother's everyday life. Therefore, it is important to provide continuing education, which not only teaches mothers about complementary feeding, but also provides practical skills in preparing varied and nutritious meals.

The importance of this sustainable approach in education is also emphasized by research conducted by Amalia (2022), which states that one-time counseling is not enough to create permanent change. Counseling that is integrated with maternal and Child Health Services, and carried out routinely, will increase success in changing maternal behavior related to providing more varied and nutritious MP-ASI.

The results of this paired t-test also showed that complementary feeding counseling by midwives not only increases maternal knowledge, but also directly affects the practice of complementary feeding that is more in line with infant nutrition guidelines. Increasing the variety of foods given to babies is very important, especially to support optimal physical and cognitive growth of babies. As more mothers introduce different types of foods, babies will get more complete nutritional benefits, which support their long-term development.

In addition, although the results are very positive, external factors such as access to nutritious foodstuffs can still influence the implementation of this knowledge. In areas with limited access or resources, mothers may have difficulty providing a variety of nutritious foodstuffs for complementary feeding. Therefore, it is important for the extension program to not only focus on theoretical knowledge, but also provide practical solutions related to how to prepare MP-ASI with easily accessible and affordable local foodstuffs.

Education that involves mothers actively in group discussions or practical demonstrations has been shown to be more effective in improving their understanding and skills. Research by Amalia (2022) found that interactive counseling helps mothers better understand how to prepare the right foods for their babies. By involving mothers in live demonstrations, they not only hear information, but also see a direct way of preparing complementary feeding, which makes them better prepared to do it at home.

The improvement of maternal knowledge and practices seen in this study is very important because good maternal knowledge about complementary feeding will be directly related to the success of optimal complementary feeding. A nutritious and varied diet not only affects the baby's health, but can also help reduce stunting and other nutritional problems in babies. Therefore, the education provided by midwives is an important step towards achieving broader public health goals, namely reducing malnutrition rates and improving the nutritional quality of babies.



However, although this education shows significant results, the next challenge is to ensure the sustainability of the correct practice of complementary feeding. The knowledge gained from this education must be followed by a commitment to apply it in everyday life. Therefore, continuous assistance is needed to support mothers in implementing what they have learned, especially in the face of obstacles that may arise, such as limited time, resources, or support from family.

The success of this education also shows the importance of collaboration between various parties, such as health workers, families, and the government. In order for MP-ASI education to have the maximum impact, there needs to be strong support from all relevant parties, including the provision of nutritious food that is easily accessible, as well as family support in terms of the distribution of tasks at home. The support of the husband, for example, is very important to reduce the burden on the mother in preparing a varied and nutritious diet for the baby.

Complementary feeding education must also take into account the local context and the specific needs of each mother. In some cases, mothers may face economic barriers or limited resources that may affect their ability to provide appropriate complementary feeding. Therefore, counseling conducted by midwives must be flexible and provide practical solutions according to the mother's condition, including advice on nutritious and affordable local food ingredients.

With continuing education, it is hoped that mothers will continue to get the support they need to provide the best complementary feeding for their babies. Governments, health workers, and communities must work together to create a supportive environment, where mothers feel empowered to make informed decisions about the provision of varied and nutritious complementary feeding.

Overall, the results of this study provide a clear picture that complementary feeding education by midwives can have a very positive impact on maternal knowledge and better complementary feeding practices. Although there are challenges to be faced, such as access to nutritious foodstuffs and family support, effective counseling remains an important step in improving the nutritional quality of infants and supporting maternal health. With a more structured and sustainable education, we can create a healthier and smarter generation, which has a strong nutritional basis from an early age.

2. Differences in Maternal Knowledge and Variations in Complementary Feeding Before and After Education

The results of this study showed an increase in maternal knowledge and improved practice of variation of complementary feeding after being given health education by midwives. These findings indicate that nutrition education provided in the context of primary health care is related to increasing maternal understanding of the principles of complementary feeding in accordance with the recommendations. This result is in line with the research of Suryani (2022) and Amalia (2022) which reported that health education through direct interaction can increase mothers' knowledge about complementary foods, especially related to food selection and diversity.



The increase in knowledge that occurs can be explained through the mechanism of increasing access to information that is more structured and easy to understand. Education provided by health workers, especially midwives, allows direct knowledge transfer, clarification of misconceptions, as well as strengthening understanding through interactive discussions. This has the potential to improve the ability of mothers to process information into practical decisions in feeding children. This approach was also reported to be more effective than one-way counseling in several previous studies.

Findings related to the increase in the variation of complementary feeding after the intervention indicate a change in behavior that goes hand in hand with the increase in knowledge. This supports the theory that knowledge is one of the important determinants in changing child feeding practices. The Dewi study (2021) also shows that increasing maternal nutrition knowledge is related to improving the quality and diversity of MP-ASI, although other factors such as food availability and socioeconomic conditions can affect its implementation.

However, these findings also suggest that increased knowledge is not always followed by optimal behavioral changes in all respondents. This indicates the presence of other inhibiting factors that were not measured in this study, such as limited access to food, family preferences, and social support. Hasanah and Yulia (2021) and Wahyuni (2021) ' s research confirms that environmental factors and family support can influence the successful implementation of recommended complementary feeding practices.

Differences in the level of effectiveness of Health Education reported in various studies can also be influenced by variations in intervention methods. Interactive counseling used in this study is potentially more effective because it allows for two-way communication, demonstrations, and active involvement of respondents. This result is consistent with the findings of Amalia (2022) who showed that the participatory approach was more effective than the passive lecture method in improving understanding and changing maternal behavior.

Overall, the results of this study reinforce the evidence that health education by midwives is associated with increased knowledge and practice of complementary feeding. However, it is necessary to understand the relationship as an association influenced by various contextual factors. Therefore, a more comprehensive, sustainable educational intervention that takes into account social factors and the availability of resources is needed to support the success of optimal complementary feeding practices.

In addition, the success of this MP-ASI education program must also involve the awareness of the community as a whole. Education about complementary feeding does not only stop at the mother, but must also involve the surrounding community, including neighbors and extended family. With the support of the surrounding environment, mothers will feel more motivated and encouraged to give their babies the best.

Overall, this study provides strong evidence that complementary feeding Education conducted by midwives can improve maternal knowledge and practice of providing more nutritious and varied complementary feeding. It is very important to ensure that babies get



optimal nutritional intake, which in turn supports their growth and development. With the right knowledge, mothers can provide complementary feeding in accordance with the recommendations and ensure that their babies get enough nutrients to grow healthy and develop properly.

However, to extend this positive impact, there needs to be a more holistic approach that involves all relevant parties, including families, health workers, governments, and communities. With strong cooperation, we can create an environment that supports the success of correct complementary feeding and reduce the risk of nutritional problems in infants in Indonesia.

In conclusion, complementary feeding education provided by midwives can improve maternal knowledge and practice of complementary feeding is more varied and nutritious. Although there are challenges, such as access to nutritious food and family support, MP-ASI education has a very positive impact in improving the quality of MP-ASI provision in Indonesia. With continuous evaluation, family involvement, and better access to nutritious foodstuffs, these educational programs can provide greater benefits to the health of infants and mothers.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that health education on complementary feeding (MP-ASI) provided by midwives is related to increasing maternal knowledge and improving the practice of giving MP-ASI. Mothers who received education showed a better level of understanding about complementary feeding and tended to apply more diverse feeding according to the nutritional needs of infants. Thus, the purpose of the study to analyze the relationship of complementary feeding education by midwives with the knowledge and practice of complementary feeding in mothers has been achieved.

Nevertheless, the results of the study need to be interpreted with caution because the study was conducted on a limited number of samples and only at one research site. In addition, several other factors that could potentially affect the knowledge and practice of complementary feeding were not analyzed in this study. Therefore, subsequent studies with a wider sample coverage and taking into account other confounding factors are needed to substantiate the findings obtained.

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