

Factors Associated with the Nutritional Status among Children Under Five in Lamawalang, Larantuka, East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara

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ABSTRACT

Background: The progress of a country is influenced by the quality of its human resources and can be seen from the degree of health which is a reflection of the health of individuals, groups and communities which is described by life expectancy, mortality, morbidity and nutritional status of the community. Toddlers are the age group that most often suffers from malnutrition or are one of the groups of people who are vulnerable to nutrition. This study aimed to determine the factors related to the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency.

Subjects and Method: This was an analytical survey with a cross-sectional design which was conducted in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka, East Flores, East Nusa Tenggara from August to September 2022. A total of 54 mothers of toddlers aged 12-59 months were selected for this study. The dependent variable is the nutritional status of children under five. The independent variables were history of exclusive breastfeeding, mother's nutritional knowledge, mother's educational level, mother's occupation and family income. Data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using the chi-square test.

Results: Lack of maternal knowledge (OR= 135.00; 95% CI= 10.57 to 1723.97; $p < 0.001$), and not exclusive breastfeeding (OR= 1.88; 95% CI= 1.43 to 2.45; $p= 0.019$) significantly influence the nutritional status of children under five. Education (OR= 0.85; 95% CI= 0.14 to 0.85; $p= 0.891$), occupation (OR= 4.07; 95% CI= 0.45 to 36.58; $p= 0.182$), family income (OR= 0.29; 95% CI= 0.03 to 2.65; $p= 0.252$) had an effect on the nutritional status of children under five, but not statistically significant.

Conclusion: Knowledge and history of exclusive breastfeeding significantly influence the nutritional status of children under five.

Keywords: nutritional status, toddlers, maternal knowledge, history of exclusive breastfeeding.

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BACKGROUND

The progress of a country is influenced by the quality of its human resources (HR). One of the criteria for quality human reso-

urces can be seen from the degree of health. The degree of health is a reflection of the health of individuals, groups and communities which is described by life expectancy,

mortality, morbidity and nutritional status of the community (Pratiwi et al., 2016).

The most nutritional problem in Indonesia is malnutrition. Toddlers (0-59 months) are the age group most often suffering from malnutrition or are one of the groups in society that are vulnerable to nutrition. The infant period is a part of growth and development that experiences a very rapid increase at an early age, from the age of 0 to 5 years which is often referred to as the "golden age" phase. Golden age is a very important period for knowing the growth and development of children carefully so that abnormalities can be detected as early as possible, in addition to being able to treat abnormalities according to the golden age period so as to prevent and minimize permanent developmental abnormalities.

The situation of undernutrition (wasting) and severe wasting in toddlers in the Southeast Asia and Pacific region in 2014 was still far from expectations. Indonesia ranks second highest for wasting prevalence among 17 countries in the region, namely 12.1%. In addition, the average coverage of case handling in the nine countries in the region only reaches 2% (Ministry of Health RI, 2019). Basic Health Research Data (Riskesdas) for 2018, malnutrition in Indonesia in 2018 reached 3.9% and malnutrition was 13.8% so that the total was 17.7% (Ministry of Health RI, 2018).

According to a data source from the East Flores District Health Office in 2020 in the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) of East Flores Regency in 2021, the achievement of the under-five malnutrition rate in 2019 was 17.1%, down 1.2% from 2018 (18.3 %). The malnutrition toddler rate in East Flores Regency in 2019 was 2.3%, a decrease of 0.4% from 2018 (2.7%).

Cases of malnutrition in the working area of the Oka Health Center in 2020

reached 138 cases, in 2021 there were 213 cases and in 2022 per March there were 193 cases of malnutrition. Data from the Oka Health Center, there are many cases of malnutrition occurring precisely in Lamawalang Village with the number of under-fives experiencing malnutrition in 2020 ranging from 28 under-fives, in 2021 there were 40 under-fives, and case data as of March 2022 as many as 35 under-fives (Oka, 2022).

This study aimed to get an overview of the factors related to the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency.

SUBJECTS AND METHOD

1. Study Design

This research is a quantitative study using an analytic survey method with a cross sectional research design. This research was conducted in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency in August to September 2022.

2. Population and Sample

The population in this study were all mothers who had toddlers aged 12-59 months in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency, totaling 54 people. The sample in this study used a total sampling technique, namely all mothers who had toddlers aged 12-59 months in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency, totaling 54 people.

3. Study Variables

The dependent variable is the nutritional status of toddlers. The independent variables were history of exclusive breastfeeding, mother's nutritional knowledge, mother's educational level, mother's occupation and family income.

4. Operational Definition of Variables

Nutritional status is the nutritional state of toddlers based on the suitability of the weighing results. Data were obtained by

measuring using a microtomes and digital scales/hanging scales.

Mother’s Nutrition Knowledge are subjects level of ability to answer questions related to nutrition for toddlers correctly. Data obtained by interview using a questionnaire.

Mother's Education Level is the last formal education that has been taken by the mother. Data obtained by interview using a questionnaire.

Mother's work is mother's work that affects childcare patterns in terms of closeness to children, providing food and caring for them is reduced, related to the length of time a person works in everyday life. Data obtained by interview using a questionnaire.

Family Income is the amount of income of all family members that can meet food needs. Data obtained by interview using a questionnaire.

History of exclusive breastfeeding is the practice of exclusive breastfeeding in infants immediately after birth until the age of 6 months. Data obtained by interview using a questionnaire.

5. Study Instruments

The data in this study were obtained from primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly in the field through interviews using a questionnaire to find out the mother's nutritional knowledge, mother's education, history of exclusive breastfeeding, mother's occupation and family income of the respondents. Secondary data was obtained from related agencies, namely the Oka Health Center, namely data on the number of children under five and cases of malnutrition in the working area of the Oka Health Center, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency.

6. Data Analysis

Univariate analysis was conducted to describe the characteristics of each research variable while bivariate analysis was conducted to see the relationship between independent and dependent variables using the chi-square.

RESULTS

1. Sample Characteristic

Table 1 showed the distribution and frequency also percentage of study subjects.

Table 1. Characteristics of research subjects.

Characteristics	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Nutritional Status	Lacking	7	13.0
	Good	47	87.0
Knowledge	Lacking	8	14.8
	Good	46	85.2
Education	Primary	12	22.2
	Middle	32	59.3
	High	10	18.5
Occupation	Not working	34	63.0
	Working	20	37.0
Income	Low	18	33.3
	High	36	66.7
History of Exclusive Breastfeeding	No	32	59.3
	Yes	22	40.7

Table 1 showed that the majority of toddlers in Lamawalang Village have good nutritional status (87.0%). The majority of mothers under five in Lamawalang Village have good nutrition knowledge (85.2%). Mother's education level with the highest percentage is at the middle/high school level (59.3%). The majority of mothers in Lama-

walang Village do not work and are housewives (63.0%). High family income is more (66.7%). The majority of toddlers in Lamawalang Village do not get exclusive breastfeeding (59.3%).

2. Bivariate Analysis

Table 2 showed the result of bivariate analysis using chi-square.

Table 2. The relationship between knowledge and attitude to prevention action.

Variables	Category	Nutritional Status		OR	95% CI		P
		Lacking	Good		Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
Knowledge	Lacking	6	2	135.00	10.57	172.39	<0.001
	Good	1	45				
Education	Primary	2	10	0.85	0.14	0.85	0.891
	Middle	4	28				
	High	1	9				
Occupation	Unemployed	6	28	4.07	0.45	36.58	0.182
	Working	1	19				
Income	Low	1	17	0.29	0.03	2.65	0.252
	High	6	30				
Exclusive Breastfeeding	No	7	25	1.88	1.43	2.45	0.019
	Yes	0	22				

Table 2 is the result of bivariate analysis using the chi-square test, mothers' lack of knowledge about nutritional status affects the nutritional status of toddlers (OR= 135.00; 95% CI= 10.57 to 172.39; p< 0.001), and a history of exclusive breastfeeding (OR = 1.88; 95% CI= 1.43 to 2.45; p= 0.019) and statistically significant. In addition, education (OR= 0.85; 95% CI= 0.14 to 0.85; p= 0.891), occupation (OR= 4.07; 95% CI= 0.45 to 36.58; p= 0.182), family income (OR= 0.29; 95% CI = 0.03 to 2.65; p = 0.252) has an effect on the nutritional status of children under five, but not statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

Relationship between Maternal knowledge of Nutrition and Toddler Nutritional Status

The results of the study found that most of the mothers of toddlers in Lamawalang

Village had good nutritional knowledge and most of the mothers with good nutritional knowledge had good nutritional status. From the results of this study, it was concluded that the knowledge factor was related to the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village. Mothers have good nutrition knowledge and have good nutrition under five because of the research results obtained through interviews with 54 mothers under five in Lamawalang Village that the majority of mothers are aged 26-35 years. Age has an influence on a person's level of knowledge where as they get older the process of mental development improves and can also affect the increase in knowledge gained (Cicik, 2017). In addition, the results of research in the field revealed that most of the mothers under five in Lamawalang Village regularly attended integrated healthcare center activities every month and received counseling provided by

health workers.

The results of this study are in line with Halimatun (2021) which states that there is a relationship between mother's knowledge and the nutritional status of toddlers. Good maternal knowledge was due to the average education of mothers at the Padang Garugus Health Center, most of them graduated from high school to university, and the results of the percentage of filling out the questionnaire where most mothers understood about food as a source of nutrition for toddlers as many as 31 mothers with an average age of 31- 40 years, which is the age of maturity for women and mothers, have a true understanding of good food processing for their toddlers.

This is in line with Nurtina et al. (2017), that good nutrition can be supported by mother's knowledge. With sufficient knowledge of nutrition, it is hoped that mothers can change inappropriate behavior so that they can choose nutritious food ingredients and prepare a balanced menu according to the needs of toddlers.

The Relationship between Maternal Education and Toddler Nutritional Status in Lamawalang Village, Laran-tuka District, East Flores

The results of research conducted on mothers of toddlers in Lamawalang Village found that most of the mothers had secondary education (SMA) and had more toddlers with good nutritional status when compared to mothers with higher education. However, from the research results obtained, it is undeniable that mothers with basic education (SD) also have toddlers with good nutritional status. Toddlers with less nutritional status are more dominant in mothers with secondary education compared to mothers with primary or higher education.

From the results of this study it was

concluded that the level of education was not related to the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village. The confounding factors that influence the mother's basic education (SD) factor on the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village are the social environment, experience, information media, and utilization of health services. Even though the mother has a low level of knowledge, the mother adds to her knowledge of toddler nutrition by exchanging experiences with her friends, diligently listening to information through print and electronic media and always participating in nutrition counseling at the integrated health center.

A good environment also affects the nutritional status of toddlers. The environment is one of the factors that support a person or group in acquiring knowledge. If in that environment most of them have good knowledge, the nutritional status of their children will also be good, because knowledge is not only obtained from school but can be obtained from daily life experiences. This then raises the assumption of researchers that a higher education level does not necessarily have a high level of knowledge.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Cholifatun et al. (2015) which stated that there was no relationship between the education level of the mother and wasting and stunting in toddlers in poor families in Balen District, Bojonegoro Regency. The level of education in poor families is mostly in the low category, due to the economic limitations experienced so that they are unable to continue their education at a higher level.

Relationship between Maternal Occupation and Toddler Nutritional Status in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency

The results of the study found that most of

the mothers in Lamawalang Village did not work. From the research conducted on mothers in Lamawalang Village, seen from work, it is known that mothers who do not work have more toddlers with good nutritional status when compared to working mothers. However, it is undeniable that even working mothers have toddlers with good nutritional status and very few even have malnourished toddlers when compared to mothers who don't work. From the results of research conducted on toddler mothers in Lamawalang Village, it was concluded that there was no relationship between the mother's occupation and the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village.

From the results of interviews with 20 working mothers in Lamawalang Village, it was found that most mothers (18 people) left their toddlers to work for 4-8 hours and at least mothers (2 people) worked for > 8 hours. While working mothers, there were around 19 mothers who entrusted their children to their families and only 1 working mother entrusted their children to a household assistant (ART) to be cared for. However, every morning before the mother goes to work, the mother prepares food for her toddler. Meanwhile, working mothers still find time to go home to breastfeed.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Devi et al (2013) which stated that there was no relationship between mother's work and the nutritional status of children aged 4-6 years in Solomon Kindergarten, this was shown from the results of the chi-square test with $p\text{-value} = 0.805$. This could be due to other factors that support working mothers having toddlers with good nutritional status, namely family income. With a working mother, it will increase family income thereby affecting the purchasing power of the family in meeting the nutritional needs

of children and other family members. This research is also in accordance with Zelita (2020) which states that there is no relationship between employment status and the nutritional status of toddlers in the working area of the North Tapin Health Center in 2020.

The Relationship between Family Income and the Nutritional Status of Toddlers in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores

The results of research conducted on subjects in Lamawalang Village found that the majority of respondents had high family income (66.7%), while respondents with low family income (33.3%). Of the 36 subjects who had high incomes, 6 children (11.1%) were found to be under five (11.1%) while the other 18 respondents with low income were found to be only 1 toddler (1.9%) who was undernourished. The factor of high family income does not affect the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village, due to the lack of mother's knowledge regarding the selection of food types and inappropriate food processing. In addition, mothers allow their children to eat snacks and instant food such as noodles more than nutritious food. From the results of research conducted on respondents in Lamawalang Village, it was concluded that there was no relationship between family income and the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village.

From the results of interviews and calculations with mothers in Lamawalang Village, in terms of household expenditure, it was found that spending on food consumption was lower than non-food consumption expenditure. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by Ninik (2005) which states that there is no relationship between family income and the nutritional status of toddlers in Betokan Demak. High income is not necessarily fol-

lowed by high nutritional status of children under five, conversely, low income does not necessarily mean that the nutritional status of children under five is not good.

The absence of a relationship between income and nutritional status of children under five can be caused by many factors. One of the factors is related to the size of the family's expenditure on food. Not all of the family income is used to meet food needs, but there are non-food needs that must also be met.

Relationship between History of Exclusive Breastfeeding and Toddler Nutritional Status in Lamawalang, Larantuka District, East Flores

The results of research conducted on toddler mothers in Lamawalang Village found that 59.3% of mothers did not give exclusive breastfeeding, so that it had an impact on the nutritional status of their toddlers and it was known that 100.0% of toddlers who did not receive exclusive breastfeeding were undernourished. From the results of the research conducted, it was concluded that there was a relationship between a history of exclusive breastfeeding and the nutritional status of toddlers. Based on the results of interviews conducted with subjects, it was found that the pattern of breastfeeding for most mothers was partial breastfeeding where in addition to giving breast milk, mothers also gave formula milk and other solid foods before the baby was 6 months old.

This is done by the mother on the grounds that the mother's milk does not come out or only comes out a little and working mothers do not have enough time to provide exclusive breastfeeding to their babies because they have to return to work after giving birth. As for mothers who assume that solid food is given so that children can be fuller.

The results of this study are in line

with research conducted by Zulmi (2019) which states that there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the nutritional status of toddlers in the Warunggunung Health Center work area in 2018. Exclusive breastfeeding is a risk factor for undernourishment in toddlers. Breast milk contains quite complete nutrition, breast milk also contains antibodies that will protect toddlers against infection. This is why toddlers who are breastfed are not susceptible to disease and can play a direct role in the nutritional status of toddlers.

This research is in line with research conducted by Nomayanti et al (2013) which states that there is a relationship between a history of exclusive breastfeeding and the nutritional status of toddlers, because before the age of 6 months the baby's digestive system is not yet able to digest food or drinks other than breast milk so if forced to eat it will potential to suffer from infections of the digestive system. This will affect the decline in nutritional status of children under five.

Based on the research results, exclusive breastfeeding greatly affects the nutritional status of toddlers as evidenced by the absence of toddlers with poor nutritional status in the group of mothers who give exclusive breastfeeding. Even so, there are toddlers who are not given exclusive breastfeeding but have good nutritional status. This can happen, because toddlers get additional food after 6 months which is better than other toddlers who experience malnutrition.

The conclusion of this study is that the factors of maternal nutritional knowledge and history of exclusive breastfeeding have a relationship with the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village, Larantuka District, East Flores Regency, while the factors of mother's education

level, mother's occupation and family income have no relationship with the nutritional status of toddlers in Lamawalang Village, District Larantuka, East Flores.

Since in this study there were still children with poor nutritional status, the suggestion that researchers can give is to health workers to be able to provide support and counseling such as the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and the right time to give MP-ASI to pregnant women, nursing mothers and mothers who have Toddlers and working mothers are taught how to express breast milk, how to store breast milk and how to give breast milk. It is expected that pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and mothers of toddlers can increase exclusive breastfeeding until the age of 6 months.

Mothers are also expected to routinely participate in counseling and posyandu activities to obtain information about toddler nutrition, nutrition for pregnant women and nutrition for breastfeeding mothers, mothers should also pay more attention to the quality and quantity of food for toddlers, and it is hoped that future researchers can examine other variables such as infectious diseases, facilities and infrastructure that support health and family support which can be a factor causing nutritional status in toddlers.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The author's role in research activities is as the head of the researcher.

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This study is self-funded.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest in this study.

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