

“GEBYAR CERIA PINAM” as Complementary Therapy to Increase Toddlers’ Appetite

Terapi Komplementer “GEBYAR CERIA PINAM” untuk Meningkatkan Nafsu Makan Balita

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Abstract:

The nutritional needs of children aged 24 - 60 months tend to increase because children are in a period of growth accompanied by busy activities. Feeding children at this age requires sufficient patience. If toddlers' activity is not balanced with nutritious intake, it will affect the health and ability of toddlers to reach their developmental stages. This community activity aims to provide mothers with creativity in making healthy, creative snacks and promoting non-pharmacological management to overcome children's lack of appetite. This community service method uses lecture, discussion, and demonstration methods focusing on mothers with children aged 24 - 60 months. This activity can provide insight into counseling and demonstrations regarding feeding babies and children and complementary care "GEBYAR CERIA PINAM," which can be applied to toddlers aged 24-60 months. The Tui Na massage was introduced to mothers and applied to the babies. This activity is expected to increase the knowledge of mothers who have toddlers 24-60 months regarding creative snacks.

Keywords: appetite, toddler, complementary, nutrition

Abstrak:

Kebutuhan nutrisi anak pada usia 24 – 60 bulan cenderung meningkat karena anak sedang dalam masa pertumbuhan yang disertai dengan aktivitas yang padat, memberikan makan pada anak usia ini membutuhkan kesabaran yang cukup. Banyaknya aktivitas balita jika tidak diimbangi dengan intake yang bergizi maka akan berpengaruh pada Kesehatan dan kemampuan balita mencapai tahap perkembangannya (Kusuma, 2019). Tujuan dilakukannya kegiatan masyarakat ini untuk memberikan kreatifitas ibu dalam membuat cemilan kreasi yang sehat dan mengenai manajemen non farmakologo untuk mengatasi nafsu makan anak yang kurang. Metode pengabdian masyarakat ini menggunakan metode ceramah, diskusi dan demonstrasi yang berfokus pada ibu – ibu yang memiliki anak usia 24 – 60 bulan. Kegiatan ini dapat memahami konseling dan demonstrasi mengenai pemberian makanan bayi dan anak dan asuhan komplementer “GEBYAR CERIA PINAM” yang bisa diaplikasikan pada anak balita usia 24-60 bulan. Ibu diajarkan pijat Tui Na dan dipraktikkan kepada bayi. Kegiatan ini diharapkan dapat menambah pengetahuan ibu yang memiliki balita 24-60 bulan mengenai cemilan kreasi yang bergizi dan dapat melakukan pijat Tui na untuk menambah nafsu makan.

Kata Kunci: anemia, ibu hamil, pisang ambon, buah naga

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INTRODUCTION

The first thousand days of a child's life, from conception to their second birthday, represent a critical window for growth and development (Likhar & Patil, 2022). During this period, adequate nutrition ensures optimal physical, cognitive, and immune system development (Shao et al., 2021; Nurprastiwi et al., 2024). Malnutrition during these formative years can lead to irreversible consequences, including stunted growth, cognitive impairments, and reduced productivity in adulthood (Soliman et al., 2021). In Indonesia, where stunting and micronutrient deficiencies remain persistent public health challenges, addressing nutritional gaps in early childhood is urgent to safeguard the nation's future (Yusriadi et al., 2024; Ariskawati et al., 2024).

Poor dietary intake and recurrent illnesses in toddlers often disrupt nutrient absorption, weakening immunity and increasing susceptibility to infections (Morales & Leon, 2023). Chronic malnutrition during this vulnerable phase can result in stunting, a condition marked by impaired growth and developmental delays (Kiani et al., 2022). Stunting affects individual potential and poses long-term socioeconomic burdens, limiting educational attainment and workforce productivity. With toddlers being the cornerstone of a nation's future, ensuring their health through targeted nutritional interventions is imperative (Akseer et al., 2022; Shofa et al., 2024).

Feeding difficulties, particularly in children aged 1–3 years, exacerbate the risk of malnutrition (Boctor et al., 2021). This phase often termed the food jag period, is characterized by selective eating habits or outright refusal of nutritious foods. While pharmacological approaches like multivitamin supplements are commonly used, non-pharmacological strategies—including herbal remedies, creative meal preparation, and traditional therapies—are gaining traction as sustainable, community-friendly solutions (Goyal & Chauhan, 2024).

Among these non-pharmacological methods, Tui Na massage has emerged as a promising complementary therapy. Rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, Tui Na is a needle-free adaptation of acupuncture focusing on stimulating acupoints to enhance digestive function and appetite (Sadiya et al., 2023). This gentle massage technique aims to optimize nutrient absorption and metabolic processes by improving blood circulation in the spleen and gastrointestinal tract, addressing physiological and behavioral feeding difficulties (Singh et al., 2024).

The nutritional components of locally available foods further complement such therapies (Oladiran et al., 2020; Ismarina et al., 2024). Broccoli, carrots, and chicken—staples in many Indonesian households—offer a rich blend of vitamins, minerals, and proteins. Broccoli provides fiber, calcium, and vitamins A, C, and K, supporting immune and digestive health (Syed et al., 2023). Carrots, abundant in beta-carotene and antioxidants, promote vision and cellular protection. Chicken, a high-quality protein source, supplies essential amino acids for muscle and brain development. Together, these foods form a holistic dietary foundation to combat malnutrition (Klevina et al., 2023).

Tui Na massage enhances the efficacy of these nutrients by stimulating the release of epinephrine and norepinephrine, hormones that regulate metabolism and appetite (Tiwery, 2024). Regular massage sessions have been linked to increased feeding frequency, improved motor function, and structural growth in toddlers. By harmonizing physiological processes and dietary intake, this approach addresses the multifaceted nature of malnutrition (Chen et al., 2024).

Community-based interventions like "GEBYAR CERIA PINAM" integrate Tui Na massage with nutritional education and locally sourced meals. This initiative empowers caregivers with practical skills to prepare nutrient-dense foods while incorporating traditional therapies to stimulate appetite. The program fosters sustainable improvements in child health outcomes by combining modern nutritional science with culturally resonant practices (Sadiya et al., 2023).

Preliminary evidence suggests that Tui Na massage improves lymphatic and blood circulation, aiding digestion and weight gain in undernourished toddlers. Enhanced nutrient absorption and increased appetite position this therapy as a viable adjunct to conventional treatments. Such low-cost, non-invasive methods are particularly valuable in resource-limited settings, where access to healthcare services may be constrained (Anggraeni et al., 2022).

In conclusion, "GEBYAR CERIA PINAM" represents a holistic, community-driven strategy to tackle malnutrition and stunting in Indonesia. By merging the physiological benefits of Tui Na massage with nutrient-rich diets, the program addresses the symptoms and root causes of feeding difficulties. Empowering families with accessible tools to nurture healthy toddlers strengthens individual futures and lays the groundwork for a healthier, more resilient generation (Skouteris et al., 2022). This initiative underscores the transformative potential of integrating traditional wisdom with evidence-based practices in public health.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This Community Service uses counseling and demonstration methods to implement non-pharmacological management with complementary therapies to overcome children's appetites. This Community Service is carried out in collaboration with TPMB Bdn. Rini M. Harianto, S.Tr.Keb, Mrs. RW 02, and cadre mothers attended by supervisors, mothers with toddlers aged 24 – 60 months as participants. Before community service implementation, several preparations are carried out first. First, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) will be conducted to determine problem priorities. The Focus Group Discussion was also attended by Midwife Rini M. Harianto from the Independent Practicing Midwife, supervisor, Mrs. RW 02, and Mrs. Nusa Indah Posyandu cadre. Based on the focus group discussion results, the priority problem at Posyandu Nusa Indah is weight loss/maintenance in toddlers aged 24-60 months due to a lack of appetite.

After obtaining priority problems, preparations for implementing community service are carried out. Counseling materials, demonstration steps on creating healthy snacks, Tui na massage to

increase appetite, preparing questions to evaluate participants' knowledge, and giving rewards to participants who can answer questions. This community service initiative, "GEBYAR CERIA PINAM," has received ethical approval from the Faculty of Health Science, Universitas Nasional, ensuring compliance with national and international ethical standards for human research. The approval underscores the program's commitment to safeguarding the rights, safety, and well-being of participating toddlers and their families throughout the intervention. By adhering to rigorous ethical guidelines, the project aims to deliver holistic, culturally sensitive, and sustainable solutions to address malnutrition while respecting community values and health priorities.



Figure 1. Health Counseling regarding Feeding Babies and Toddlers



Figure 2. Tui Na Massage

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The community service program "GEBYAR CERIA PINAM" was successfully implemented at the Independent Midwife Practice Place in Gandul, Cinere Village, Depok, West Java, targeting parents of toddlers aged 24–60 months. A total of 22 participants, including midwives, community

health cadres, academic supervisors, and mothers, actively engaged in the intervention. The session focused on educating caregivers about feeding difficulties in toddlers, particularly during the food jag phase, and introducing complementary therapies such as Tui Na massage to address appetite and digestive issues. The interactive format combined theoretical explanations, practical demonstrations, and participatory discussions, fostering a collaborative learning environment (Laksono & Nursitiyarah, 2023).

During the educational session, participants were briefed on the physiological and behavioral factors contributing to feeding difficulties, emphasizing the role of nutrient absorption and metabolic health. The Tui Na massage technique was demonstrated as a non-invasive method to stimulate digestive function and improve appetite (Ha et al., 2025). Key acupressure points and massage sequences targeting the spleen and gastrointestinal tract were taught, aligning with traditional Chinese medicine principles. The hands-on demonstration allowed participants to practice the technique under supervision, ensuring clarity and confidence in its application (Dai et al., 2023).

A post-session quiz was conducted to evaluate knowledge retention, where participants answered questions related to feeding challenges and Tui Na massage protocols. Five of the 22 attendees responded correctly to all questions, and one mother successfully demonstrated the massage technique on a toddler dummy. Correct answers were rewarded with prizes to incentivize engagement. This approach reinforced learning and highlighted the participants' ability to apply theoretical knowledge practically. The quiz results indicated a moderate understanding of the material, suggesting that targeted follow-ups could further enhance comprehension.

Educational leaflets were distributed to all participants, containing illustrated guides on Tui Na massage steps and recipes for nutrient-dense snacks using locally available ingredients like broccoli, carrots, and chicken. These resources were designed to serve as quick references for caregivers, ensuring continuity of practice at home. Feedback from participants indicated that the visual aids were user-friendly and culturally adaptable, addressing potential barriers to implementation. The integration of traditional therapies with modern nutritional science was well-received, reflecting the community's openness to holistic health approaches.

Post-intervention discussions revealed that participants felt more empowered to address feeding difficulties through non-pharmacological methods. Mothers expressed enthusiasm for incorporating Tui Na massage into their daily routines, citing its simplicity and perceived benefits for their children's digestion (Chen et al., 2025). Community health cadres emphasized the program's alignment with local health priorities, particularly in reducing stunting rates. However, some participants requested additional training to refine their massage techniques, underscoring the need for sustained mentorship.

Despite the program's success, challenges such as time constraints for hands-on practice and varying literacy levels among caregivers were noted. Future iterations could include smaller group sessions for personalized guidance and multimedia resources to accommodate diverse learning

preferences. Collaborations with local midwives and cadres will be critical to ensuring the long-term adoption of the practices.

GEBYAR CERIA PINAM demonstrated the feasibility of integrating traditional therapies and nutritional education to address feeding difficulties in toddlers. The active participation of caregivers and healthcare providers highlighted the community's readiness to adopt innovative, low-cost interventions. By combining ethical rigor, culturally resonant practices, and practical resources, the program is a model for scalable community health initiatives to improve child nutrition and development outcomes.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The implementation of community service went well and was attended by all parties who had been invited. Participants can receive all the material and answer all questions during the question-and-answer session. Participants can also demonstrate the complementary care "GEBYAR CERIA PINAM" to overcome the lack of appetite in toddlers aged 24-60 months. By bringing leaflets containing the complementary care that has been provided, mothers are happy to be able to practice it at home.

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