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Breastfeeding Education in Term of Knowledge and Attitude through Mother Support Group

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Abstrak

Pengetahuan dan sikap sangat penting untuk keberhasilan pemberian susu badan. Tujuan penyelidikan ini adalah untuk menyelidik pengaruh pengetahuan dan sikap dalam hal pemberian susu badan pada para ibu Indonesia yang bergabung dalam program Kelompok Pendukung Ibu (KP-Ibu). Seramai 221 ibu menyertai penyelidikan ini. Regresi bertingkat digunakan untuk menilai pengaruh pengetahuan dan sikap terhadap pemberian susu badan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pengetahuan dan sikap mempengaruhi pemberian susu badan.

Kata kunci: *pengetahuan, sikap, pemberian susu badan, Indonesia*

Abstract

Knowledge and attitude are important factors for successful breastfeeding practice. The objective of this study was to assess knowledge and attitude on breastfeeding among Indonesian mothers who joined mother support group (MSG) program. This was a community based cross-sectional study. There were 221 mothers participated on this study. Multiple regressions were used to assess the influence of knowledge and attitude on breastfeeding. The results showed that the level of knowledge and attitude of the mothers are high, which influence breastfeeding practice.

Keywords: *knowledge, attitude, breastfeeding, MSG*

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Introduction

The justification for breastfeeding as the infant feeding method of choice continues to be well documented in the scientific literature. Significant nutritional, anti-allergenic, immunological and psychological benefits of breast milk have been identified by many researchers. Many studies have described the unique advantages of human milk (Chezem et al, 2003; Kim 1994; Ball & Bennet, 2001; Labbok, Perez, & Valdes, 1994;). Breast milk contains nutrients at percentage that are exactly suited to the needs of the infant for growth and development. Breast milk changes from the colostrums of the few day of nursing to mature milk over the six months following birth, and it protects against infections in the gastrointestinal tract and respiratory organs as well as providing protection while the immune system of the infant is developing (Chezem et al, 2003). Breast milk helps in the development of a healthy personality in an infant by demonstrating the mother's love to the infant (Kim, 1994). Clinical experiments have established the value of breastfeeding in preventing otitis media, gastroenteritis, asthma, shigella infection, and a variety of other diseases. For the mother, lactation facilitates a faster return to a pre-pregnant weight while suppressing ovulation for many. The economic advantage and the enhancement of the mother-infant bond have also been discussed as important benefits to breastfeeding (Ball & Bennet, 2001; Labbok, Perez, & Valdes, 1994).

Current WHO/ UNICEF recommendations for optimal infant feeding are exclusive breastfeeding for approximately the first 6 months postpartum, after which complementary food should be introduced gradually, with the continuation of breastfeeding until 2 years or beyond (WHO, 2003). In the past decade, there has been a myriad of research into the factors affecting breastfeeding duration to identify risk factors for failure. Maternal demographics, attitudes and beliefs, and hospital practices have been examined (Dennis, 2002). Despite the significant research on the barriers to breastfeeding and the many efforts to promote and support it, almost every country in the world fails to meet the WHO recommendations for exclusive breastfeeding (WHO, 2001). For example, in Indonesia the majority of mothers initiate breastfeeding; however, according to WHO only 32% are exclusively breastfeeding at 6 months (Statistic Central Bureau, 2007). Among the mothers who do initiate breastfeeding, only 50.12% are breastfeeding up to 24 months (Indonesian Ministry of Health, 2007).

The infant feeding decision is complex and involves the influence of psychological, social, and economic factors, and health care system. Several authors have identified education and social support as the key factors in the promotion of breastfeeding. Due to lack of knowledge, sociocultural, economic, and personal reasons, women may choose to bottle-feed completely. Those who do intend to breastfeed may supplement too early with formula, thus undermining the establishment of lactation, or have potentially remediable problems that lead to premature discontinuation of breastfeeding (Avery et al., 1998).

A mother support group (MSG) program has been conducted as a pilot project to promote breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia. The mother support group program is based on community empowerment. In the mother support group, mothers can share with each other about breastfeeding and other health problems. Eligibility is the main principle in this program, so that they feel free to speak and share each other.

The mother support group (MSG) program aims to facilitate the creation of supportive social environment for early initiation to breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding from birth to six months (Mercy Corps, 2009). The objective of this program is improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes and practices regarding early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding in communities.

Under those objectives, several peer-mothers in the community were trained to facilitate the MSG. The training aims to equip selected young mothers in the community with sufficient knowledge and skills to organize and facilitate group learning among pregnant and nursing women in their neighborhoods.

The objectives set by the MSG for improving breastfeeding practice which includes knowledge, skill, and attitude are modifiable variables that can be change to enhance breastfeeding practice; partially exclusive breastfeeding baby the age of 0-6 months.

Mothers need to know the skills and advantages of breastfeeding so that they can continue to feed their babies and keep up their milk supply. The knowledge about benefits and technique of breastfeed is very important for successful breastfeeding practice. Mother's knowledge was identified as important in influencing infant feeding choice (Kong & Lee, 2004).

Mothers' attitude toward breastfeeding plays a role in the choice of feeding method (Kong & Lee, 2004). Parents of breastfeeding infants had more positive attitude towards breastfeeding than parents of formula feedings infants (Shaker, Scott, & Reid, 2004). Kools et al (2005) stated that attitude predicted the initiation of breastfeeding.

The primary aim of the present study was to examine the influence of knowledge and attitude on breastfeeding practice among Indonesian MSG mothers. There is rare of study that examines the influence of knowledge on breastfeeding practice among Indonesian MSG mothers.

Method

This was a cross-sectional study carried out in Kasihan, Bantul, Yogyakarta, Indonesia from January to May 20011. The study population was mothers who have 0-6 months baby that joined on mother support group (MSG) program. A total 221 mothers were participated in this study.

The data collection was administered by the researcher and two research assistants. The subject is asked to response to the questionnaires sincerely. Subject was given 45 minutes time to complete all the questionnaires.

A demographic section is also included in the questionnaires for mothers to obtain relevant information required for this study. The researcher gave out the questionnaires to the mothers together with a cover letter which explain the nature of the study. The questionnaires are anonymous to gain mothers' confidence in giving their sincere responses to the questions asked. As their identity will not be known, the researcher labels each questionnaire accordingly for recording and filing purposes.

A breastfeeding assessment questionnaire was used to collect data and information related to the breastfeeding practice. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this questionnaire was 0.88. Breastfeeding knowledge is measured using a questionnaire with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.79. Attitude toward breastfeeding was measured using a breastfeeding attitude questionnaire with the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.89.

Potential confounding factors such us sociodemographic variables (age, ethnic group, educational level, and employment status) was also gathered. Statistical analysis was stepwise multiple regressions to asses association. Employment status was known to the most important confounder. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 software was used for analyses. All statistical tests were carried out using a significant level of 0.05.

Results

A total 221 mothers were participated for this study. Majority mothers are between 20-35 years old (77.4%). Almost all of them are Javanese (96.4%). More than a half of mothers are completed high school level (55.7%).

Table1. Distributions of socio-demographic variables

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Age group		
< 20 years	12	5.4
20-35 years	171	77.4
>35 years	38	17.2
Ethnic group		
Javanese	213	96.4
Non-Javanese	8	3.6
Education level		
Elementary school	15	6.8
Secondary school	46	20.8
High school	123	55.7
University	37	16.7
Employment status		
Employed	48	21.7
Not employed/ full housewife	173	78.3

Based on mean score of variables, mothers are in the high level of knowledge, attitude and breastfeeding practice. Majority of the mothers were giving exclusive breastfeeding to their babies (70.1%). Factors influenced with breastfeeding practice were analyzed by multiple regression analysis. Knowledge has a strong influence on breastfeeding practice (Beta= .23, $p= .00$). Breastfeeding practice is influenced weakly by attitude (Beta= .15, $p= .02$). Only one demographic factor influences breastfeeding practice that is employment status, with beta .16, and $p= .02$.

Discussions

The result showed that mothers were in the high level of knowledge, attitude and breastfeeding practice. Majority mothers are practicing exclusive breastfeeding (70.1%). The result was in line with the objectives set by the MSG for improving breastfeeding practice which includes knowledge, skill, and attitude.

Finding of the current study is similar with the previous studies by other researchers. Susin, et al. (1999) found that mothers' with high level of knowledge had a 6.5 times higher chance of exclusively breastfeeding at the end of the third month, and 1.97 times higher chance of continuing breastfeeding to the end of the sixth month. Kong and Lee, (2004) in their mix-method study concluded that mother's knowledge was identified as important in influencing infant feeding choice. Moreover, the study done by Shaker, Scott, & Reid, (2004) showed that parents of breastfed infants were more knowledgeable about the health benefits and nutritional superiority of breastfeeding.

Finding of this study is also similar with the previous study conducted by Dungy et al. (2008). They found that knowledge predicts breastfeeding initiation in this population. Another study done by Zama, (2006) concluded that level of knowledge related to exclusive breastfeeding practice. Similar with Zama (2006), Eva, (2010) also found that level of knowledge related to exclusive breastfeeding practice.

However, result from the present study is different from the findings by Chatman et al. (2004). They conducted a cross-sectional study was conducted in 11 health centers within the parish of Saint Ann, Jamaica. The objective of this study was to gather information about factors that influence exclusive breastfeeding and its duration. A pre-tested questionnaire collected information on breastfeeding knowledge toward intention to breastfeed and other relevant socio-demographic characteristics. Information was documented for 599 mother-child pairs. The prevalence of breastfeeding initiation was 98.2 percent; of mothers who initiated breastfeeding, 22.2 percent practiced it exclusively (at least 6 months). They found that there is no difference occurred between exclusive and nonexclusive breastfeeding mothers in terms of knowledge about breastfeeding.

Mothers need to know the skills and advantages of breastfeeding so that they can continue to feed their babies and keep up their milk supply. The knowledge about benefits and technique of breastfeed is very important for successful breastfeeding practice. Mother's knowledge was identified as important in influencing infant feeding choice (Kong & Lee, 2004).

From the result of present study as well as the other studies discussed above, it appears that knowledge is a predictor of breastfeeding. Almost all of the studies showed that knowledge is important in influencing breastfeeding practice.

The findings are in line with the social cognitive theory (SCT) (Bandura, 2004). From SCT perspective, mothers' behavior can be influenced by mothers' personal factor such as knowledge. Mothers' breastfeeding practice is influenced by mothers' breastfeeding knowledge.

The results are also in line with integrated behavior model (IBM). According to the IBM (Montana & Kasprzyk, 2008), a particular behavior is most likely to occur if a person has the knowledge. Breastfeeding practice is most likely to occur if mother has the knowledge about breastfeeding.

Knowledge is the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject acquired by a person through experience or education (Oxford English Dictionary, 2009). There are some types of knowledge. Declarative knowledge is knowledge about *what*; it is knowledge about facts, terms, concepts, and generalizations. Procedural knowledge is knowledge about *how*; it is knowledge about procedures or problem-solving methods. Conditional knowledge involves knowledge of both what and how. It involves knowing the necessary information and how to apply it in the right situation (O'Donnell et al, 2009).

In MSG, mothers share and discuss all of the types of knowledge in term of breastfeeding. They got and share knowledge about *what* is breastfeeding, about *how* to breastfeed, as well as knowledge about problem solving in breastfeeding. All of the types of knowledge above were covered in MSG.

Breastfeeding knowledge is mother's understanding about breastfeeding and breastfeeding practices, especially exclusive breastfeeding. The elements of knowledge that have significant influences on breastfeeding were examined. There are nine element of knowledge that examined, they are: (1) Knowledge about breastfeeding advantages to baby, (2) Knowledge about breastfeeding advantages to mother, (3) Knowledge about colostrums, (4) Knowledge about effective feeding, (5) Knowledge about duration of feeding, (6) Knowledge about complementary feeding, (7) Knowledge about problem with breastfeeding, (8) Knowledge about practical aspect of breastfeeding, and (9) Knowledge about breastfeeding skill.

Facing problem with breastfeeding is a challenging task for mothers. They need to well know about problem with breastfeeding. If they well knowledgeable about this task, they will more successfully to face the problem. In contrast, if they did not well knowledgeable, they did know how to handle it or face it properly. Mothers with high knowledge about breastfeeding problem know how to face the problem and solve the problem and have a bigger chance to breastfeed their babies successfully.

Breastfeeding is significantly influenced by attitude ($\beta = .17$; $p = .01$). Mothers with high positive attitude toward breastfeeding will also engage in higher breastfeeding practice.

Finding of this research supports the statement by Dungy et al. (2008). They investigated infant feeding attitude among socio-economically disadvantaged mothers. The result showed that attitude predicts breastfeeding initiation in this population.

Finding from current study is supporting SCT theory (Bandura, 1977). Based on SCT, breastfeeding practice is influenced by cognitive factors such as attitude.

Mothers' attitude toward breastfeeding plays a role in the choice of feeding method (Kong & Lee, 2004). Parents of breastfeeding infants had more positive attitude towards breastfeeding than parents of formula feedings infants (Shaker, Scott, & Reid, 2004). Kools et al (2005) stated that attitude predicted the initiation of breastfeeding.

Result from present study is in line with the previous study conducted by Rhodes et al. (2008). They examined the breastfeeding attitudes and practices among American Indian population in Minnesota. They interviewed women prenatally ($n = 380$), at two weeks ($n = 342$), and at six months postpartum ($n = 256$). They conducted multivariable analysis to examine the behavioral and attitudinal correlates of breastfeeding initiation and duration. The result showed that positive attitudes about breastfeeding positively associated with breastfeeding initiation and breastfeeding at two weeks.

The findings of the current study also support the other previous studies (Mossman et al, 2008; McKinley & Hyde, 2004; Dix, 1981, Tarkka, Paunonen & Laippala, 1999; Li et al, 2002; Persad & Mensinger, 2008). All of them concluded that attitude influenced breastfeeding practice.

However, Ludvigson (2003) and Chatman et al, (2004) reported that attitude did not influence breastfeeding. Shi, et al also stated that according to bivariate analyses, mothers holding positive attitude toward breastfeeding were more likely to practice full breastfeeding. However, multivariate logistic regression analyses showed no significant influence of attitude on breastfeeding.

Conclusion

The level of knowledge, attitude, and breastfeeding practice among Indonesian mother joined MSG are high. There are significant influences of knowledge and attitude on breastfeeding. MSG program perhaps a good choice for educating mothers in term of breastfeeding behavior.

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