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The effect of breastfeeding home visits by integrated health post cadres on mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding

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Abstract

Background: Exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life is an essential effort to improve infant health status and reduce morbidity and mortality rates. However, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding remains suboptimal, one of which is influenced by mothers' attitudes toward breastfeeding practices. One of the promotive strategies that can be implemented to develop positive maternal attitudes is breastfeeding home visits conducted by integrated health post cadres). Preliminary data in Pekon Sukamaju indicated that some mothers had not fully practiced exclusive breastfeeding.

Purpose: to determine the effect of breastfeeding home visits by integrated health post cadres) on mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding.

Method: This study employed a quantitative method with a pre-experimental one group pre-test and post-test design. The population consisted of all mothers with infants aged 0–28 days in Pekon Sukamaju, totaling 25 individuals, with 20 respondents selected using accidental sampling according to inclusion criteria. Data were collected using an attitude questionnaire with a Likert scale administered before and after the home visit intervention. Data analysis was conducted using univariate analysis to determine the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values, and bivariate analysis using the Paired T-Test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Results: The results showed that the mean score of mothers' attitudes before the home visit was 33.05 (SD = 6.886), which increased to 48.25 (SD = 6.146) after the intervention. The mean difference of 15.20 indicated an improvement toward a more positive attitude.

Conclusion: The Paired T-Test result obtained a p-value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating a significant effect of breastfeeding home visits by integrated health post cadres on mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding.

Keywords: Attitudes; Exclusive Breastfeeding; Home Visit; Mothers; Integrated Health Post Cadres.

INTRODUCTION

Breast milk is the ideal natural nutrition for infants, as it contains complete nutrients, antibodies, and growth hormones that play an important role in a child's physical and cognitive development (Wulandari & Wardani, 2020). The World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding along with appropriate complementary foods up to two years of age or beyond (World Health Organization, 2023) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first

six months of life without any additional food or drink. In Indonesia, also emphasizes that exclusive breastfeeding is an important step in reducing infant morbidity and mortality rates and in supporting the achievement of maternal and child health targets (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023).

Although various breastfeeding campaigns and promotion programs have been implemented, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia

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during the 2023–2024 period has still not fully reached the national target. Based on the Survei Kesehatan Indonesia 2023, only about 68.6% of infants aged 0–5 months received exclusive breastfeeding, although this figure later increased to 74.73% according 2024 (Astuti & Setiyadi, 2023). While this represents a significant improvement compared to previous years, it remains below the ideal target (e.g., 80%), reflecting ongoing challenges in changing maternal behavior (Sritangsirikul, Kitsahawong, Matangkasombut, Seminario, & Pitiphat, 2024).

One of the important determinants of successful exclusive breastfeeding is the mother's attitude toward breastfeeding (Dolesgit, Parsa, Astuti, & Winata, 2025). Attitude is an individual's affective response to an object, formed by knowledge, experience, values, and environmental influences. Mothers who have a positive attitude toward exclusive breastfeeding tend to have a higher willingness to breastfeed consistently, even when facing challenges such as fatigue, lack of support, or pressure from their surrounding environment (Mulyani & Subandi, 2020).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative method with a pre-experimental design, specifically a one-group pre-test–post-test design. The population in this study consisted of all mothers with infants aged 0–28 days in Pekon Sukamaju, totaling 25 individuals, with a sample of 20 respondents selected using an accidental sampling technique based on inclusion criteria. Data were collected using an attitude questionnaire with a Likert scale administered before and after the home visit intervention. Data analysis was conducted using univariate analysis to determine the mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values, as well as bivariate analysis using the Paired T-Test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$.

Community health volunteers (integrated health post cadres) play a strategic role in shaping positive attitudes in mothers through education and support. One method considered effective is home visits, where cadres visit mothers directly in their homes to provide education and counseling. This method allows for a more personalized approach and two-way communication, allowing cadres to tailor information to the mothers' specific needs.

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RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondent (N=20)

Variable	Results
Age (Mean±SD) (Years)	(26.5 ± 4.31) (19-35)
19-24	7/35.0
25-30	9/45.0
31-35	4/20.0
Education (n/%)	
Elementary School	2/10.0
Junior High School	4/20.0
Senior High School	12/60.0
Bachelor's Degree	2/10.0
Parity (n/%)	
Primipara	9/45.0
Multipara	11/55.0

Table 1 shows that the average age of respondents and standard deviation is (26.5 ± 4.31). The majority of respondents have a SHS education level of 12 (60.0%) with the majority having multiparity parity with a total of 11 (55.0%).

Table 2. Mothers' Attitudes Before and After the Home Visit (Pre- and Post-test)

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Attitude before	33.05	6.886	21	45
Attitude after	48.25	6.146	36	56

Table 2 shows that mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding before the home visit varied among respondents. The difference between the minimum and maximum scores indicates that mothers' attitudes were not evenly distributed, with some mothers already having better attitudes while others still exhibiting relatively low attitudes.

Meanwhile, mothers' attitudes after the intervention showed an improvement compared to before the home visit. The increase in both the minimum and maximum scores indicates that, overall, all respondents experienced an improvement in their attitude scores after receiving the home visit. This indicates a shift toward more positive attitudes overall, as well as a reduction in the gap in attitude scores among respondents.

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Table 3. Hasil Uji Paired T-Test Mother's Attitude

Variable	Mean Difference	t-value	df	Nilai signifikansi
Pre-test – Post-test	-15.20	-31.027	19	0.000

Based on Table 3, the significance value obtained is 0.000, which is smaller than $\alpha = 0.05$. This result indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between mothers' attitudes before and after the home visit intervention conducted by integrated health post cadres. The mean difference of -15.20 shows that the average attitude score after the intervention is higher than before the intervention. The negative sign in the mean difference indicates the direction of change, namely an increase in attitude scores at the post-test. Based on the results of the Paired T-Test, it can be concluded that home visits conducted by integrated health post cadres have a significant effect on mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding. Statistically, the difference in mothers' attitudes before and after the intervention is significant, therefore the research hypothesis is accepted.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that before the home visit intervention conducted by integrated health post cadres, mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding were relatively lower compared to after the intervention. This is reflected in the mean attitude score at the pre-test of 33.05, indicating that some respondents had not yet developed fully positive attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding practices. In addition, there was variation in scores among respondents, illustrating differences in the level of acceptance and belief regarding the importance of exclusive breastfeeding.

After the intervention in the form of breastfeeding home visits by integrated health post cadres, there was an increase in mothers' attitude scores toward exclusive breastfeeding. This is evidenced by the higher mean score in the post-test compared to the pre-test, as well as increases in the minimum and maximum scores among respondents. The average attitude score rose from 33.05 to 48.25, indicating a shift toward more positive attitudes.

These findings suggest that although mothers had previously received information about exclusive breastfeeding through posyandu, healthcare workers, and other media, the information alone had not been fully effective in shaping positive attitudes. This study is consistent with other research which found that breastfeeding education through home visits significantly improves mothers' attitudes and self-confidence (UNICEF, 2025; Sembiring, Pratiwi, & Oktafirnanda, 2024). Another study also reported that individualized approaches through home visits are more effective than group counseling in improving

mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding (Khotimah, Satillah, Fitriani, Miranti, Maulida, Hasmalena, & Zulaiha, 2024).

The researcher assumes that the improvement in mothers' attitudes after the home visit occurred due to a more personal, interactive, and problem solving oriented educational approach, enabling mothers to better understand and accept the information (Mashadi, Hasibuan, Riasti, Nusroh, & Sa'adah, 2025).

Based on the questionnaire results, the improvement in mothers' attitudes after the home visit was observed in almost all statement items. The most notable increase occurred in statements reflecting greater maternal confidence in dealing with breastfeeding challenges. This indicates that the home visit intervention successfully enhanced the conative component and mothers' self-efficacy. In addition, improvements were also seen in mothers' understanding of correct breastfeeding techniques, indicating an enhancement in the cognitive component. Mothers became more knowledgeable about proper breastfeeding practices after receiving direct education from integrated health post cadres (Nguyen, Nguyen, Ninh, Nguyen, Nguyen, Vu, & Ho, 2022).

For statements related to the affective component, namely feelings of enjoyment and emotional bonding between mother and baby, there was also an increase (Nindya, Kurniawan, Nafisah, & Wahyuningsih, 2024). This shows that home visits not only provide knowledge but also strengthen the emotional aspects of mothers in breastfeeding. Therefore, the increase

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in post-test scores reflects that all components of attitude (cognitive, affective, and conative) improved after the home visit intervention.

The results of the statistical test indicate that there is a significant difference between mothers' attitudes before and after the home visit, meaning that home visits conducted by integrated health post cadres) have an effect on mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding. These findings suggest that the change in mothers' attitudes did not occur by chance, but rather as a result of the intervention, which helped to shape more stable and consistent attitudes in supporting exclusive breastfeeding (Lastrini, Wahyudi, Zaman, & Sapada, 2024). Some mothers still have doubts about the adequacy of breast milk, proper breastfeeding techniques, and the influence of the family environment on breastfeeding decisions (khotimah et al., 2024).

Theoretically, according to attitudes are formed through processes involving cognitive, affective, and conative components. Knowledge alone is not sufficient to form positive attitudes unless it is accompanied by emotional experiences and motivation to act (Rahman & Dewi, 2024). In this study, prior to the home visit, mothers had not received direct and personalized assistance, so the formation of positive attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding had not been optimal (Kusuma, Raharjo, & Farida, 2024).

This improvement indicates that the home visit intervention had an influence on shaping mothers' attitudes. Through home visits, integrated health post cadres) are able to provide education in a more personal manner and tailored to the mothers' conditions (Laube, Paramsothy, & Leong, 2021). Direct interaction allows mothers to express questions, concerns, and challenges they face in practicing exclusive breastfeeding, making the information provided more relevant and easier to understand (Flores, Coit, Mendoza, Leon, Konda, Lecca, & Franke, 2021).

This individualized approach also strengthens the cognitive and affective components in attitude formation (Nurkamila & Puspitasari, 2024). Mothers not only receive information but also gain reinforcement and support that increase their confidence in providing exclusive breastfeeding (Sritangsirikul et al., 2024). Thus, the increase in post-

test scores reflects a change in mothers' attitudes after receiving breastfeeding home visits from integrated health post cadres (Suprpto, 2024).

According to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, changes in attitudes and behavior can occur through processes of observation, social interaction, and positive reinforcement (Loveday, Hlangu, & Furin, 2020). In home visit activities, integrated health post cadres) not only act as information providers but also as supportive figures who reinforce mothers' positive attitudes (Alya, Sari, Sari, & Anggraini, 2025). In home visit activities, integrated health post cadres) not only act as information providers but also as supportive figures who reinforce mothers' positive attitudes (Pertiwi, Nawangsari, & Irwanto, 2021).

CONCLUSION

The results of the Paired T-Test showed a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating a significant effect of breastfeeding home visits by integrated health post cadres) on mothers' attitudes toward exclusive breastfeeding.

SUGGESTION

Integrated health post cadre are expected to enhance their active role as companions for breastfeeding mothers, not only in posyandu activities but also through educational and supportive home visits. They are also encouraged to continuously improve their knowledge and skills related to breastfeeding counseling so that the information provided becomes more accurate and effective.

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