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The role of cadres in utilizing integrated health post for toddler growth monitoring

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Abstract

Background: Integrated Health Post plays a crucial role in monitoring toddler growth as an effort to prevent nutritional problems and stunting in the community. The successful utilization of integrated health post is inseparable from the role of cadres as the spearhead of health services at the community level.

Purpose: to describe the role of cadres in utilizing integrated health post for toddler growth monitoring.

Method: a descriptive approach. Informants in this study consisted of midwives, integrated health post cadres, and mothers of toddlers selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis.

Results: The results showed that cadres have carried out their roles as servants, educators, motivators, companions, and community mobilizers. Cadres play an active role in toddler growth monitoring services, such as providing basic information regarding weighing results, reminding integrated health post schedules, and accompanying mothers of toddlers who experience growth problems or who rarely attend Integrated health post regularly. However, the role of cadres as educators has not been optimal due to limited educational materials, low cadre confidence, uneven training, and limited supporting facilities and infrastructure.

Conclusion: The conclusion of this study indicates that capacity building for cadres is necessary through ongoing training and guidance from Community Health Center to ensure more effective, optimal, and sustainable monitoring of toddler growth in the community.

Suggestion: It is recommended that Community Health Center provide continuous training, guidance, and adequate educational media and facilities to improve the capacity and confidence of cadres, especially in their role as educators, so that the implementation of Integrated health post services can be more optimal and sustainable.

Keywords: Integrated Health Post Cadres; Integrated Health Post Utilization; Toddler Growth.

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring toddler growth is an important indicator for assessing a child's health and nutritional status and for early detection of growth problems such as stunting, wasting, malnutrition, and so on. Improper monitoring can result in delayed detection of nutritional problems, which can lead to physical and mental disorders. and long-term immune system (Minarsih, Evrianasari, & Anggraini, 2023).

Inadequate monitoring can increase cases of stunting and wasting, increase the burden on public health, and even jeopardize the quality of future human resources (World Health Organization, 2023).

One of Indonesia's current health issues, stunting, remains a significant concern, with stunting reaching 19.8% of toddlers based on the 2024 Indonesian Nutritional Status Survey (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2025).

A 2024 report released by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Bank revealed that internationally, 150.2 million infants (23.2%) were stunted and 42.8 million were master, indicating that malnutrition remains a major health issue. In Magelang Regency, of the 72.603 infants,

approximately 52.460 children, or nearly 70%, experienced growth problems, including stunting, underweight, and malnutrition, necessitating a more planned intervention approach (Central Statistics Agency, 2025). Data recorded at the Ngluwar Community Health Center showed a high prevalence of growth problems, with 157 infants stunted, 100 wasted, and 181 underweight. Stunting is caused by malnutrition during the first 1.000 days of life, inadequate parenting practices, poor sanitation, and limited access to health services, necessitating specific and sensitive interventions. WHO and UNICEF recommend the implementation of Growth Monitoring and Promotion (GMP) programs. Efforts to support early detection of various child growth issues in Indonesia include monthly integrated health service posts activities.

The Indonesian government has provided significant support to improve growth monitoring of children under five through Presidential Regulation No. 72 of 2021 and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 13 of 2024, which establish integrated health service posts as centers of public health services. The Indonesian Ministry of Health has implemented changes in the implementation of Integrated health post by enhancing the service system, improving data recording, and providing training to cadres to develop the 25 competencies required for implementing Integrated health post activities. Research conducted shows that government policies involving various sectors play a crucial role in efforts to reduce stunting in Indonesia, ensuring strong political and administrative support for growth monitoring (Yusnita, Kurniawan, & Hakim, 2024).

The motivation of Integrated health post cadres is affected by a lack of socialization, low recognition, and minimal support, which results in low community

participation (Suriati, Abidin, & Asmarwati 2024). The success of Integrated health post as a community-based health service depends heavily on the role of parents of toddlers, but it faces several challenges, such as low maternal awareness, limited time and access, a lack of understanding of the importance of growth monitoring, and cadres' adaptation to digital recording systems, which have resulted in a decline in toddler attendance and the quality of monitoring (Putri & Dwihestie 2020). The quality of growth monitoring is influenced by several factors, including training for cadres, availability of equipment, ability to read growth charts, guidance from the community health center, complete Integrated health post facilities, and active support and participation from mothers of toddlers (Widyastuti, Setiawan, Nasution, & Astawan, 2025).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research model and was conducted in the Ngluwar Community Health Center working area, Ngluwar District, Magelang Regency, Central Java. This study utilized primary and secondary data. The informants in this study were divided into three groups: key informants (midwives), primary informants (cadres), and supporting informants (mothers of toddlers). The research instrument used was an interview guide, and a mobile phone served as a voice recorder. The interview guide had previously undergone expert judgment testing. Informants were selected using purposive sampling and in-depth interviews. The data analysis method used in this study was thematic analysis, which involved organizing data, reading and analyzing data, coding, compiling theme descriptions, connecting themes, and interpreting the meaning of themes.

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RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Informant Code

Name	Informant Code
Midwife	B1, B2
Cadre	K1, K2, K3, K4
Mother Of Toodler	I1, I2

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the number of informants involved in this study consisted of key informants (midwives) consisting of two Integrated health post midwives, primary informants (cadres) consisting of four Integrated health post cadres and supporting informants consisting of two mothers of toddlers.

DISCUSSION

Based on interviews with informants, the role of cadres indicates that Integrated health post cadres have partially fulfilled their role as educators in monitoring toddler growth. Cadres understand the function of Integrated health post and are able to provide education on growth monitoring, as evidenced by interviews with mothers.

Their toddlers also receive education, such as basic information about growth, for mothers of toddlers during Integrated health post activities. This is evidenced by interviews with informants:

"Um, in our opinion, a toddler integrated health post is a place, forum, or facility provided to help mothers of toddlers monitor their growth." (Cadre)

"Yes, abilities vary from person to person. In our place, it's usually just, 'Ma'am, your little one's weight has gone down a bit, how's he been eating lately?'" (Midwifery)

"Yes, there's an explanation, like, 'At this age, this weight is this, ideal height is this.' After every weigh-in, the cadre explains, 'Ma'am, why is your little one's weight going down?' Usually, they immediately ask why. If his weight is normal, 'Thank God, his weight is normal, ma'am,'" (Mother of toodler)

Based on interviews with three informants (cadres, midwives, and mothers of toddlers), it was found that Integrated health post cadres have fulfilled their role as educators in utilizing Integrated health post for monitoring toddler growth. The informants stated that Integrated health post is understood as a tool or forum that helps mothers routinely monitor their children's growth. Cadres not only carry outweighing and height measurements but also provide explanations of the measurement results to mothers of toddlers. This demonstrates that cadres

understand the function of Integrated health post as a community-based growth monitoring service. Interviews indicate that cadres actively communicate when they detect growth problems, such as weight loss in children. Cadres inquire about possible causes, including the child's eating habits, and explain whether the measurement results are within the normal range for their age. The explanations given after weighing indicate a process of education and interpretation of growth results for mothers of toddlers. The role of cadres is not only technical and administrative, but also educational and communicative in supporting toddler growth monitoring at Integrated health post. To further support the research findings, researchers conducted direct observations during services at the Demangan and Madesan integrated health posts. Cadres, acting as educators, carried out their duties, providing education to mothers of toddlers after the measurements and weighings were completed.

Based on the research results, cadres understand that Integrated health post is a means of monitoring toddler growth and fulfills this function in accordance with its role. This understanding aligns with national policy, which states that Integrated health post is a form of Community Participation-Based Health Effort (UKBM) that functions to monitor growth, prevent stunting, and improve maternal and child health. The general guidelines for Integrated health post management, published by the Indonesian Ministry of Health in 2020, state that cadres are responsible for carrying outweighing, recording, and providing information on monitoring results to target groups. This indicates that the research findings align with Integrated health post operational standards at the

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national level, where cadres are not only involved in technical activities but also understand the role of the services they provide.

Research other conducted in the Public Health Journal revealed that communication between cadres and mothers has a significant impact on improving mothers' understanding of their children's nutritional status and encouraging compliance with Integrated health post visits. Activities reflecting simple educational and counseling methods implemented by cadres, such as when cadres encounter growth problems in toddlers and attempt to identify the cause, cadres also provide explanations regarding age-appropriate weighing results and inform them whether the child's condition is normal or not, demonstrating that the cadres have conducted a basic analysis of growth standards (Pratiwi, Suryoputro, & Widjanarko, 2021). In ongoing Integrated health post (Integrated Health Post) activities, measurement results are recorded on the Health Card (KMS) and compared with growth charts based on WHO standards. Research conducted in the Indonesian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics found that cadres' ability to explain KMS results in an easy-to-understand manner plays a role in improving nutritional understanding among mothers with toddlers (Rahmawati & Nugroho, 2022).

Interviews with informants indicated that toddler growth monitoring services provided by cadres at the Integrated Health Post were running well. Cadres performed their duties effectively, including weighing, measuring length/height, and recording the results. Cadres also had a good understanding of the growth charts in the KIA (Child Health Card) handbook. Furthermore, the service provided by the cadres was friendly. This was also felt by the recipients of Integrated health post services, namely mothers of toddlers, who regularly attended the Integrated health post. This was evidenced by the following interview with the informant:

"Yes, according to our knowledge, there are two sheets of KIA charts: blue and pink. Blue is for boys and pink is for girls. The red line means very bad. Yellow is a warning sign or warning. Green is when it's back to normal." (Cadre)

"Yes, the service is quite good. It's good that everyone is able to measure themselves because they've been trained here. We think the staff are friendly during service." (Midwifery)

"Um, we think the service is good. The staff are friendly. If we have questions, they can answer them immediately. If we're late or late, we'll call and remind them during the integrated health post activities. Thankfully, we attend the Integrated health post regularly every month." (Mother of toddler)

Based on interviews with informants (K, B, and I), it was revealed that the integrated health post cadres have performed their role as health service providers in the community very well. Cadres monitor growth through activities such as weighing, measuring height or length, and recording the results on a growth chart. Informant B stated that the cadres have the ability to explain the Child Identity Card (KIA) and growth charts by explaining the meaning of growth indicator colors such as green, yellow, and red, so that mothers of toddlers can understand their children's development. The cadres also demonstrate a warm and responsive service attitude toward the community, in addition to providing technical services. Informants stated that the cadres are able to provide good service because they have received previous training, which has improved their skills in measuring and recording accurately. Cadres also actively interact with the community, answering questions from mothers of toddlers, and reminding them of the Integrated health post schedule when a target is absent. This demonstrates that cadre services are not limited to technical health aspects but also reflect a health service focused on a social approach and community empowerment. Researchers directly observed that the services provided by cadres were quite good. They were friendly when serving mothers of toddlers, and carried out their duties by measuring, weighing, recording, and providing PMT (Food Supplements). The results revealed that Integrated health post cadres had implemented community health services through activities such as weighing, measuring height, and recording toddler growth. The implementation of these activities reflects the cadres' role in providing basic health services at the community level. Monitoring toddler growth is a crucial aspect in the early identification of nutritional problems and growth disorders so that necessary action can be taken early. Research conducted showed that the active participation of integrated health post cadres was significantly related to the success of monitoring the growth of toddlers in community health centers, emphasizing that the role

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of cadres is a key element in the quality of Integrated health post services (Sugiarti, Dewi, & Ernawati, 2021)

The cadres' ability to understand the growth charts contained in the KIA (Child Health Handbook) demonstrates that they have effectively carried out their health service duties in monitoring children's growth. Cadres are not only responsible for recording and measuring, but also for communicating information from the results of their services to mothers of toddlers so they can directly understand their children's growth. This aligns with the statement of the which emphasizes that cadres play a crucial role in Supporting growth monitoring through weighing, recording, and providing growth charts as part of preventive health services in the community. Another study indicated that friendly, responsive, and effective communication from cadres is a crucial factor in the success of Integrated health post services in the community. Cadres who are friendly, kind, attentive to mothers and children, and remind them of the Integrated health post activity schedule reflect the quality of community-based health services that focus on the satisfaction of service recipients at Integrated health post toddlers (mothers of toddlers) (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2021). This is in line with research conducted which stated that the quality of cadre services, which include friendliness, communicative attitudes, and attention to mothers of toddlers, has a positive relationship with increased community trust and sustainable Integrated health post utilization. Friendly and effective cadre services are key indicators of the success of community health services in supporting growth monitoring of toddlers (Ningsih, Lestari, & Hidayat, 2022).

Interviews with informants revealed that cadres act as motivators by reminding mothers of toddlers through various methods, such as using digital invitations via group chats, broadcasts in prayer rooms or mosques, and making announcements at community events such as Family Welfare Movement (PKK), during mujahadah (religious gatherings), and other activities. This is evidenced by the following interview results:

"Um, to motivate mothers of toddlers, we usually share invitations in WhatsApp groups in the afternoon. Then, usually, the neighborhood head or village head broadcasts in the morning at the mosque

or prayer room after dawn. Not only that, but at gatherings like the PKK (Family Empowerment and Family Planning) gatherings, we usually remind them so they don't forget." (Cadre)

"Yes, to increase participation, we created a group. Every time there's a Integrated health post activity, we share the schedule, usually the cadres share it again with their village groups. Then, in the morning, there's also a broadcast at the mosque." (Midwifery)

"We actually come to the Integrated health post to learn about toddler growth and development, but usually we provide other information about immunizations, family planning, toddler classes, and pregnant women. Sometimes we provide counseling because the midwife from the community health center is so busy." (Mother of toddler)

Based on interviews with informants, it was found that Integrated health post cadres have been fulfilling their role as motivators to increase the participation of mothers of toddlers in Integrated health post activities. Cadres make various efforts to remind and encourage mothers of toddlers to attend Integrated health post by providing information about the activity schedule. This information is delivered through several communication channels, such as WhatsApp groups for mothers of toddlers, announcements at mosques or prayer rooms, and at community events such as Family Welfare Movement (PKK) meetings and other community activities. These efforts demonstrate that cadres play an active role in motivating residents through social communication approaches within their communities. Cadres also encourage mothers of toddlers by explaining the benefits of attending Integrated health post, which include monitoring their children's growth and development and access to other health services such as immunizations, family planning services, classes for pregnant women, and health education from community health center medical personnel. These activities demonstrate that cadres function not only as information providers but also as motivators for the community to increase the sustainable utilization of Integrated health post health services. Researchers directly observed that when a mother of a toddler was absent, a cadre contacted the mother by telephone. Integrated health post cadres function as motivators in the community, tasked with encouraging and motivating target families to be more active in utilizing health services. is available at the

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integrated health post Disseminating information using social media and announcements in the surrounding community demonstrates cadres' adaptation to developments in community communication, facilitating the dissemination of health-related information (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018).

The use of WhatsApp groups, announcements at mosques, and community activities as tools to disseminate information demonstrates a successful community communication method in increasing the participation of mothers with toddlers. Research conducted revealed that communication by cadres through social media platforms and community social networks can increase the involvement of mothers and toddlers in Integrated health post activities because the information is received more quickly and frequently. Interpersonal and social communication methods have proven to be effective strategies in increasing the use of community-based health services (Sari, Rahman, & Putri, 2021). A global study published in BMC Public Health 2023 stated that community health volunteers who are proactive in providing encouragement and health-related information to families can increase the use of health services for mothers and children and improve healthy lifestyles within families. The role of cadres as motivators in this study aligns with the concept of community-focused, promotive and preventive health services.

Based on the interviews I conducted, the role of cadres as community facilitators is effective. They provide attention to mothers of toddlers whose children are experiencing growth problems and mothers of toddlers who rarely attend. Cadres' efforts to provide support to mothers of toddlers whose weights are abnormal at the Integrated Health Post include conducting home visits and reminding the Integrated health post of upcoming Integrated health post visits, if any. For mothers of toddlers with toddlers experiencing growth problems such as stunting, malnutrition, or undernutrition, cadres conduct home visits and provide PMT (Food Supplements). The interviews provide evidence that cadres provide support:

"Usually, we first convey the examination results, then slowly explain the child's condition to the mother. After we explain, the midwife will also provide follow-up instructions, so there will be instructions after that.

Usually, for mothers who rarely attend, we make home visits." (Cadres)

"For the cadre's assistance, we will conduct home visits. Previously, at the integrated health post (Integrated health post), the results of the weighing measurements were conveyed first, and then we will provide instructions for going to the Community Health Center. Home visits are usually made if there is a daily PMT for mothers who rarely attend the Integrated health post." (Midwifery)

"For the cadre, we will explain the weighing results and the measurements. For example, if someone's weight is slightly lower, normal, or has increased, they will be informed. Then, if the cadre's weight is lower, they will be directed to the midwife. After that, they will usually receive a daily PMT. The cadre will make home visits if there is a daily PMT. For mothers of toddlers who rarely attend, the cadre will make home visits. also" (Mother of toddler)

The interview results above indicate that cadres perform their mentoring role well, both during Integrated health post activities and through home visits. Cadres assist mothers of toddlers during weighing and measuring and conduct home visits to toddlers experiencing growth problems or mothers who are reluctant to come to the Integrated health post. This mentoring is accompanied by the provision of PMT (Food Supplements) funded by village and community health center funds, with the duration adjusted to the level of the toddler's growth problems. This demonstrates that cadre mentoring is sustainable and oriented towards following up on growth monitoring results. Other data supporting the research findings include direct observations at Integrated health post s, demonstrating the role of cadres as community facilitators through home visits to provide PMT. Furthermore, during Integrated health post services, cadres consistently accompany mothers of toddlers during measurements and weighing. Mentoring is a key strategy for successful toddler growth monitoring because it allows cadres to reach toddlers who do not regularly attend the integrated health post Through home visits, cadres can still monitor children, directly explore the causes of growth problems within the family environment, and ensure that toddlers with growth problems are not overlooked in the early detection process. A BMC Public Health study found that outreach activities such as home visits allow cadres to interact directly

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with families, strengthen relationships, and explain the importance of growth monitoring. This approach is also especially important for mothers of toddlers who feel embarrassed or reluctant to come to the Integrated health post when their children experience growth problems (Aisyah, Mayadewi, Utami, Rahman, Adriani, Al Farazi, & Kozlakidis, 2025).

Support is also provided through follow-up, providing supplementary feeding (PMT) to toddlers experiencing growth problems. This is further supported by research which states that PMT is an important intervention for improving children's nutritional status, especially when provided based on growth monitoring results and tailored to the severity of the nutritional problem. PMT not only serves as nutritional assistance but also as an educational tool for families regarding appropriate eating patterns for toddlers. Comprehensive support through home visits, capacity building for cadres, and provision of PMT demonstrates that Integrated health post cadres play an active and proactive role in improving toddler welfare, not merely carrying out routine Integrated health post service duties (Widyastuti et al., 2025).

Based on interviews, the role of cadres as community mobilizers is evident in how they remind toddlers about Integrated health post through announcements on WhatsApp and broadcasts in mosques. However, there are no such digital posters yet. Cadres are always enthusiastic and active in reminding Integrated health post residents, as evidenced by the following interview results:

"We share it in the group the day before, and the announcement will be made at the mosque by the regional head in the morning. We don't have any digital media yet, but usually, it's not just that. During PKK gatherings, religious studies, or mujahadah (religious study groups) like that, announcements are also made, so to speak." (Cadres)

"Usually, the cadres remind us through the WhatsApp group, and we also collaborate with the regional head or the regional head to announce it in the morning at the mosque." (Midwifery)

"During PKK gatherings and mujahadahs, there's usually an announcement by the cadres. Then, there's also an announcement in the group the day before the integrated health post. The regional head usually broadcasts it in the morning. During women's gatherings, there's an announcement, and the

mujahadah (religious study group) is made by the cadres." (Mother of toddler)

Based on the interview results above, it is clear that cadres play an active role in mobilizing the community to increase attendance of mothers of toddlers at the integrated health post through various communication channels. Cadres utilize digital communication media in the form of WhatsApp groups as the primary means to regularly provide reminders of the Integrated health post schedule, especially one day before the activity. Reminders are also delivered through broadcasts in mosques delivered by local government officials, so that information can reach a wider community. Cadres also employ an interpersonal approach by reminding participants directly when meeting in the neighborhood or during mothers' gatherings. These findings indicate that community mobilization efforts are carried out in a multi-layered and consistent manner, reflecting an active and contextual communication strategy to increase the participation of mothers of toddlers in Integrated health post activities. Other data supporting the research findings include cadres acting as community mobilizers by consistently reminding them in WhatsApp groups and broadcasting in mosques in the morning before. The data from the integrated health post were obtained through direct observation and direct interviews with mothers of toddlers attending the Integrated health post.

Community mobilization by Integrated health post cadres is a crucial aspect in empowering communities to actively utilize available health services, particularly toddler growth monitoring activities. The direct involvement of cadres in community activities, such as delivering announcements through village forums, broadcasts at places of worship, and communication between community groups, plays a role in increasing community awareness and understanding of the function and benefits of Integrated health post. This finding aligns with research showing that persuasive communication strategies employed by cadres through various media, including WhatsApp and verbal communication, can increase community participation in community-based health activities such as Integrated health post, thus making basic health service goals more easily achieved (Widiastuti et al., 2025).

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The use of digital communication technology has also been shown to help expand the reach of information and strengthen cadre engagement with service targets, in addition to local community-based approaches. A study in the context of increasing participation in integrated health service posts reported that integrating digital media, such as WhatsApp for digital reminders and technology-based nutrition education for communities, can significantly increase the attendance of mothers of toddlers and family nutrition literacy. This approach allows cadres to deliver information not only face-to-face but also continuously through digital media, making information more quickly accessible to busy or time-constrained communities (Lusida, Andriyani, Hendrawati, Aini, Azqia, Zidni, & Oktariawan, 2025). Improving cadres' capacity in digital communication also strengthens their role as community health advocates. Training in digital media usage has been shown to improve cadres' ability to convey information and reach a wider service target (Khiyaroh & Elviana, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Integrated Health Post cadres in the Ngluwar Community Health Center (Community Health Center) work area have played a role as service providers, educators, motivators, companions, and community mobilizers in utilizing the Integrated health post to monitor toddler growth through service activities, providing basic education, providing schedule reminders, and assisting mothers of toddlers experiencing growth problems. The cadres' role as educators has been implemented in the form of basic education, although it has not been optimal and comprehensive, particularly in providing advanced education related to toddler growth. Therefore, strengthening the cadres' capacity and ongoing guidance from the Community Health Center is necessary to ensure more effective and sustainable Integrated health post utilization.

SUGGESTION

Midwives are advised to always invite fertile couples to be able to accept and take the time when given health education and can make the right decision to use effective family planning as needed.

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