Empowering community health volunteers (cadre) as an effort to improve health in postpartum mothers

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Abstract. Maternal and child health are important issues to pay attention to. Empowerment of community health cadres is one of the strategies as an effort to prepare them physically and psychologically to care for mothers and babies after returning from the hospital or maternity hospital. The problems identified here were the lack of knowledge and lack of activity of community health cadres. One effective way to increase productivity to improve maternal and child health was through this community service program through the empowerment of community health cadres as an effort to improve health in postpartum mothers and their babies. The purpose of this community service was to empower groups of community health cadres to improve their knowledge and skills so that the maternal and child health became better. The method of implementing this activity was the community development model, which was an approach that involved the community directly through partnerships with community health cadres through counseling and training. The results of this service program showed that the lowest pretest score obtained the was 50, and the highest was 70. Post-test scores obtained a lowest score of 80 and a highest score of 100. The average score of the pretest was 65.38, and the post-test was 90. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was an increase in knowledge by 45.88%. The increase in knowledge, skills, and community involvement, especially of health cadres, can increase the community empowerment through education to improve health especially for postpartum mothers and their babies.

Keyword: Postpartum Care, Baby Care, Cadres, Education

1. Introduction

The postpartum period is one of the critical periods in the life of a woman and a baby. Self-care during the postpartum period is very necessary because during the postpartum period, a woman will experience many changes in herself both physically and psychologically [1]. One effective way to increase productivity to improve maternal and child health is through women's empowerment. The development and empowerment of women must start from the womb. Empowering women is not necessarily the responsibility of the government only. The role of the community is needed to support programs from various sectors. Women's health can be achieved with a synergy between the government and the community [2].

Empowering cadres for postpartum mothers is one of the strategies as an effort to improve health in preparing them physically and psychologically to take care of mothers
and babies after returning from the hospital or maternity hospital. Maternal care during the postpartum period is very simple and can be easily practiced so that the mother's condition recovers quickly and can take care of the baby optimally [3].

The COVID-19 pandemic presents new challenges that threaten the health of mothers and children because indirectly the COVID-19 pandemic has changed the order of health services in Indonesia, including maternal and infant health services, such as Posyandu activities. Development of Villages and Families on Active Alertness is shown through the activity of posyandu which is one of the criteria for achieving Villages and Kelurahans that are on active standby [4].

Empowering health cadres is one of the strategies as an effort to improve health in preparing them physically and psychologically to take care of mothers and babies after returning from the hospital or maternity hospital. Maternal care during the postpartum period is very simple and can be easily practiced so that the mother's condition recovers quickly and can take care of the baby optimally [3].

Based on the results of community service by Mariyatun (2019) regarding skill improvement and assistance of health cadres in lactation management in Jetis Village, Sukoharjo Regency, it was stated that the majority of health cadres as the respondents had good knowledge about breast care and proper breastfeeding techniques after given relevant skills. From the results of these two studies, it can be concluded that health education is very effective in increasing the knowledge and skills of cadres.

Maternal, child, and reproductive health needs attention. The implementation carried out was the need to plunge into the community through community empowerment. The targeted area was a village in Sleman Regency namely Sidokarto Padukuhan Village, Jetis, Prenggan. The first step was to conduct a situation analysis to find out the number of posyandu- or integrated health service centre- cadres and their competence. The data showed that there were 15 cadres whose competencies included managing a 5-desk posyandu, assisting women who needed health referrals, and other activities such as posyandu for the elderly and education about nutritious food. It is necessary to empower cadres to be able to provide education about health care for postpartum mothers so that the community, especially postpartum mothers, can avoid complications. Based on the background above, it is necessary to carry out community service entitled "Movement for Caring for the Health of Mothers and Children through Empowerment of Posyandu Cadres as an Effort to Improve the Health of Postpartum Mothers at Padukuhan Jetis Prenggan Sidokarto Godean".

2. Methodology

The method of this community service program was community development model which is an approach that directly involves the community as the subject and object of community service. The target of this activity was cadres who would empower the community in their respective regions. This community service program was carried out through several stages as follows.

a. Preparation Stage

The preparatory phase began with conducting a focus group discussion (FGD) with the head of the village and health cadres to determine the health problems that occurred in the area. Then, a coordination was carried out with the service team to determine the problem-solving strategies.

b. Implementation Stage

At the implementation stage, the service team carried out community service activities in Jetis Prenggan Padukuhan Area. This activity was carried out in 2 meetings. The first
meeting was held in February 2023 through counselling in the form of training and lectures on postpartum maternal care. The second meeting was held in March 2023 through counselling about baby care and baby massage demonstration training. The guest speaker for this community service was a lecturer in Maternity Nursing, Nursing Science Study Program, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

c. Monitoring and Evaluation Stage

The service team carried out monitoring and evaluation to health cadres in the area. Participants also received guidance materials and training videos that could be used as guidelines to monitor the implementation of education by cadres in their respective areas. At the end of the activity, there was a post-test as an evaluation of this activity.

d. Data Collection

Data collection was carried out with a pretest and ended with a post-test. The instrument was a questionnaire made by the service team containing 10 multiple choice questions. Data analysis was completed through frequency distribution using SPSS. Pretest was conducted to determine the extent to which participants knew and understood care for postpartum mothers and baby care. In this community service program, the pretest was carried out before health education through questionnaires distributed to participants. Furthermore, the service team conducted lactation massage training and baby massage. The activity was attended by 13 participants. In the discussion session, participants were very enthusiastic and shown many questions. They also shared experiences on how to overcome reproductive health problems. After providing education at the closing of the activity, participants completed a posttest to find out the extent of participants' knowledge and understanding of the material that had been given.

3. Result & Discussion

a. Preparation Stage

Before carrying out the activity, the community service team coordinated with the service partner, the head of the Jetis Village, Prenggan, Sidokarto, Godean. This coordination aimed to establish friendship and cooperation with service partners. Furthermore, the village head brought together posyandu – integrated health centre-cadres with the community service team. The coordination discussed service activities that would be carried out in the research area. The community service team conducted an FGD with the hamlet head and posyandu cadres to determine the health problems that occurred in the area. From the meeting, it was agreed that the partners wanted activities that could facilitate to increase knowledge and skills for cadres in the region. Based on the results of this coordination, it was agreed that the service team would provide a solution namely by providing health education and training to improve maternal and child health for cadres. This community service activity was carried out with the hope that the cadres would get an idea of how to conduct education and skills to improve the health of mothers and children. Based on the results of this coordination, the community service team consisted of 2 lecturers, 1 partner lecturer and 2 students of the nursing science study program. The service team held a meeting to equalize perceptions about the material to be presented in the activity so that several agreements were obtained including the material and resource persons for the community service activities, the composition of tasks for each team, the time of implementation of activities, the schedule of community service activities, and the preparation of tools and materials for baby massage and lactation massage training demonstrations.

b. Implementation Stage

The service team carried out community service activities starting from January-March 2023. The implementation of the activity was divided into 2 meetings at Jetis, Prenggan,
Sidokarto, Godean. The first meeting was held in February 2023 with an agenda of health education about improving maternal and child health and its management delivered by the UMY maternity nursing lecturer in the nursing science study program. Furthermore, the second meeting was held in March 2023 regarding training on baby massage and lactation massage delivered by the lecturer and the service team. This activity began with a pretest and ended with a post-test. The instrument used for the pretest-post-test was in the form of a questionnaire made by the service team.

Empowerment in this community service program was a process to develop, be independent, and be able to increase the potential of posyandu health cadres. The performance of cadres was influenced by various factors, and the performance of posyandu cadres greatly influences the success of the targets set by the puskemas- or public health centre, in a posyandu activity [5].

Maternal and child health is still a very important issue to pay attention to in Indonesia. Empowering health cadres and involving health workers with community leaders or people who are trusted by the community to provide knowledge and behavior to the surrounding community will make it easier for the community to imitate or take their knowledge as important information in changing their behavior [3].

The community health volunteers who were selected and served voluntarily had limitations namely the lack of knowledge, the lack of activeness of the posyandu cadres, decreased performance, the lack of guidance for the posyandu cadres from the puskemas workers evenly, and the lack of motivation of the cadres. The posyandu cadres needed to get a refreshment in the form of empowerment. Empowerment was very important in order to improve the performance of the cadres themselves as well as knowledge in providing services at posyandu one of which was maternal and child health. Analysis towards posyandu cadres found that proper health promotion training made cadres good and broad-minded reproductive health promoters [6].

c. Evaluation Stage

The community service team conducted monitoring and evaluation through the head of the health cadres in the area. Participants also received materials and videos of postpartum maternal care and baby care which could be used as guidelines and to monitor the implementation of health education in their respective areas after the training. This activity was attended by 13 participants consisting of cadres in the Jetis, Prenggan, Sidokarto, Godean region. The participants were very enthusiastic and active in participating in this activity as evidenced by the large number of participants who asked...
questions during the discussion session after given the material. At the end of the activity, a post-test was carried out as an evaluation of this activity.

**Table. 1.** Participant characteristics (n:13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;45 yo</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt; 45 yo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior high school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>92.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>69.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the number of cadres with < 45 years old is 5 (38.5%), >45 years old is 8 (61.5%), 13 participants are all female (100%), 12 participants (92.3%) are from high school education level, 1 participant (7.7%) is a bachelor, 9 of them (69.2%), 1 participant (7.7%) is a civil servant, and 3 participants (23.1%) are housewives.

**Table. 2.** Pretest and post-test frequency distribution (n:13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Minimum score</th>
<th>Maximum score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>The value of increasing knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>65.38</td>
<td>45.88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the table, the lowest pretest score is 50, and the highest is 70. Post-test score obtains a lowest score of 80 and a highest of 100. The average score of the pretest is 65.38, and the post-test is 90. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there was an increase in knowledge by 45.88%.

4. **Conclusion**

The result of this community service activity is an increase in knowledge and skills regarding postpartum maternal care and baby care. An increase in knowledge, skills and involvement of the community, especially health cadres, can increase community empowerment through education to improve health, especially for postpartum mothers and their babies.

**Reference**


