

## The role of lactation counselling in increasing exclusive breastfeeding coverage at Galang Health Centre, Batam City

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### Abstract

Exclusive breastfeeding is very important for the survival of a child. According to the Ministry of Health's performance report, the coverage rate of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia in 2023 was 67.94%. Based on the EPPBGM report, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding success rate in Batam City in 2023 will be 76.2%. In Galang Health Centre itself in 2023, the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding will be 59.3% and the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding success rate is still below the national target of 80%. One of the factors determining the success of exclusive breastfeeding is the role of health workers in providing breastfeeding counselling. Intensive breastfeeding counselling will result in a good level of knowledge for mothers and a change in attitude towards breastfeeding. This study aimed to analyse the relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding success at UPTD Puskesmas Galang, Batam City. This study used a cross-sectional approach, with a sampling method using random sampling technique of 126 mothers who have babies aged 6 months to 12 months at UPTD Puskesmas Galang, Batam City. The results obtained p value 0.015 where the p value <  $\alpha$  0.05 can be interpreted that there is a relationship between the provision of breastfeeding counselling with the success of exclusive breastfeeding at UPTD Puskesmas Galang Batam City.

**Keywords:** Exclusive breastfeeding; Breastfeeding; Complete Nutrients; Education

### 1. Introduction

Breast milk is the most ideal food for a baby where breast milk is safe, clean and contains a variety of nutrients that are needed by babies [1]. According to the Ministry of Health Performance Report data in 2023 the exclusive breastfeeding achievement in Indonesia was 67.94%, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics the exclusive breastfeeding achievement in Riau Islands Province in 2023 was 62.88%, based on data from the Batam City Health Office profile the exclusive breastfeeding achievement in Batam City and UPTD Puskesmas Galang in 2023 was 76.20% and 59.3% and this figure is still far from the national target of 80%.

According to WHO, exclusive breastfeeding is the provision of breast milk alone from newborn to 6 (six) months of age without any other additional food or drink [2]. Exclusive breastfeeding has many benefits for the baby, mother, family and country. For babies, breast milk is the main food source that is rich in nutrients needed by babies and is easily digested compared to formula milk. Breast milk contains colostrum which is good for the baby's immune system, increases the bond between a child and its mother, and is good for intelligence because breast milk contains DHA and AA. The benefits for the mother are preventing the occurrence of breast dams and reducing the risk of mastitis, practical, natural birth control, preventing breast cancer, preventing cervical cancer [3], the benefits for the family are that the family can save money where the family does not need to spend more funds to buy formula milk, the benefits for the State are to reduce morbidity and mortality rates [4]. The impact of low exclusive breastfeeding on infants aged 0-6 months is that it can aggravate diseases such as ARI 35.09%, diarrhoea 38.07%, and undernutrition 49.2% which can

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have negative effects on infants such as slow body growth, susceptibility to disease, decreased intelligence levels and mental disruption of children, serious malnutrition can cause child death and stunting [5].

There are several factors that can influence the success of exclusive breastfeeding, one of which is breastfeeding counselling. Breastfeeding counselling is a counselling activity focused on breastfeeding that targets mothers who are pregnant in the first trimester up to breastfeeding mothers [1]. According to WHO, quality counselling is carried out by doctors, nurses, midwives, lactation counsellors, from pregnant women, and after mothers give birth, it is hoped that counselling can increase the achievement of exclusive breastfeeding. [2]

To improve a mother's knowledge about breastfeeding, the most appropriate method is breastfeeding counselling compared to counselling. This is because counselling is more personal because each mother has different information needs. A good counsellor should be able to gather as much information as possible so that the counsellor knows what information the mother really needs, and what the mother's concerns are. [1]

Based on previous research conducted by Liliانا, the intensity of counselling is also an indicator of success in increasing a mother's knowledge about exclusive breastfeeding, correct position and attachment, this is because the more often a mother gets information about breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding will indirectly increase the mother's knowledge, if knowledge increases, this will have an effect on the mother's desire and attitude to breastfeed [6].

According to previous research conducted by As, with good cooperation and communication between a counsellor and mother and the ability of the counsellor who shows an open attitude and is willing to be a good listener and is able to create a comfortable atmosphere, it will be able to explore information on the extent of the mother's knowledge and develop the mother's knowledge to be even better. In addition, the role of the counsellor is able to foster the mother's trust and motivation, so that the mother considers the counsellor as a source of information that has an impact on the courage of a mother in expressing the ignorance she has faced so far. [7]

## 2. Material and methods

### 2.1. Material

This study is an analytical observational study with a cross-sectional approach. This study was conducted in the work area of UPTD Puskesmas Galang in January 2025-April 2025. The population of this study were mothers who had babies aged 6 months to 12 months. For the minimum number of samples using the Slovin formula so that the minimum number of samples obtained was 96 respondents, for the selection of respondents using random sampling.

The independent variable in this study is the mother who is given counselling. The dependent variable in this study is the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Heading 4, WJS Heading level 4

### 2.2. Methods

The data analysis method used was univariate and bivariate analysis with the Chi Square test to determine the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, namely the relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding.

## 3. Results and discussion

### 3.1. Univariate Analysis

**Table 1** Data Characteristics of Respondents' Education Level

No.	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	Total	
		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
1	Education		
	Primary Education (SD-SMP)	45	46.9
	Secondary Education (SMA)	41	42.7
	Higher Education (S1)	10	10.4
		96	100

Table 1 shows that less than half of the respondents only received primary education.

### 3.2. Bivariate analysis of the relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding

**Table 2** Relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding

Counselling	Not exclusively breastfed		BREAST MILK Exclusive		Total		P value
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Often	13	25.5	38	74.5	51	100	0,015
Rare	13	59.1	9	40.9	22	100	
Never	11	47.8	12	52.2	23	100	
Total	37	38.5	59	61.5	96	100	

The table above shows the results of the chi square test with a p value of  $0.015 < \alpha (0.05)$  which means that there is a statistical relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1. Characteristics of Respondents' Education Level

Based on the results of this study, it can be seen that less than half of the respondents (46.9%) only received basic education. The geographical location of the UPTD Puskesmas Galang working area consists of several islands and is very far from the city centre and only a few schools are there so that the majority of respondents only finished elementary school and junior high school. In addition to geographical location, there are also parents who think that girls do not need to go to high school because in the end they will remain a housewife and take care of the kitchen. Based on research conducted by Bakker, it is said that with a higher level of education, a mother will be easier to receive information, especially information related to nutritional needs for their baby so that it is expected that the child's nutrition will be fulfilled [8]. In addition to research conducted by Bakker, another study was also conducted by Lindawati, Lindawati argued that the level of education affects the success of exclusive breastfeeding. Where the higher the level of education of a mother, the greater her desire for information about exclusive breastfeeding. Mothers with higher education also tend to more easily accept and understand the information provided. [9].

Based on these findings, the researcher believes that the low level of education of most respondents, due to geographical and cultural factors, influences their understanding and acceptance of health-related information, especially regarding child nutrition and exclusive breastfeeding. The remote location of the area and the lack of education facilities meant that most mothers only completed primary education. In addition, the existence of cultural views that limit women's education further strengthens this condition. In fact, as stated by Bakker and Lindawati, higher education for mothers plays an important role in increasing their knowledge and awareness of the importance of child nutrition and exclusive breastfeeding. Therefore, increasing access to education and targeted counselling is very important to support maternal and child health in the UPTD Puskesmas Galang area.

### 4.2. Relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding

Based on the results of statistical tests showed that the provision of breastfeeding counselling has a relationship with the success of exclusive breastfeeding where the *p-value* is  $0.015 < \alpha (0.05)$ . The results showed that mothers who were often given counselling were more successful in giving their babies exclusive breastfeeding compared to mothers who rarely received breastfeeding counselling or who were never given breastfeeding counselling. The breastfeeding counselling programme at UPT Puskesmas Galang started in November 2022, and was initially only conducted at the Parent Health Centre. It was only in early 2023 that this policy was expanded by requiring all Pustu, Polindes or Poskesdes to implement this activity. After this policy was implemented in 2023, the exclusive breastfeeding rate at UPTD Puskesmas Galang increased. This can be one of the proofs that breastfeeding counselling has a relationship with the success of exclusive breastfeeding. The results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by Nurfatimah who said that breastfeeding counselling provided routinely can increase the number of mothers who want to breastfeed their babies exclusively because the more frequent the counselling process will affect the mother's level of knowledge of exclusive breastfeeding so that there will be changes in the mother's behaviour to breastfeed [10].

The results of this study are in line with the results of research conducted by Sri Mulyani where Sri Mulyani argues that the provision of lactation counselling is proven to be effective in improving maternal attitudes to breastfeeding if given in the prenatal, intranatal and postnatal periods [11] In addition to Sri Mulyani, the results of research conducted by Sehhati say that the provision of counselling if carried out since the mother is still pregnant, the success rate of exclusive breastfeeding will also be better [12] . Another benefit of frequent counselling is the repetition of information that becomes a supporting factor in the mother's understanding of the information that has been given. Information provided repeatedly can increase a person's knowledge retention . [7]

In the 2009 WHO guidelines, the minimum number of breastfeeding counselling contacts was 7. However, in the 2018 update of the WHO guidelines, this contact was changed to a minimum of 6 times from pregnancy to breastfeeding [13] . Breastfeeding counselling should be provided face-to-face and additionally by phone or *Whatsapp* message from pregnancy to delivery or during breastfeeding. [14]

In the counselling process, a counsellor is needed who has skills in providing counselling such as skills in further exploring information that is known to the mother and that is not known by the mother so that the information to be provided is in accordance with the mother's needs. [15] .

Based on the results of this study, the researcher argues that the provision of routine and continuous breastfeeding counselling has a very important role in improving the success of exclusive breastfeeding. This can be seen from the increase in exclusive breastfeeding rates in the UPTD Puskesmas Galang working area after the counselling programme was fully implemented. The counselling provided not only increases the knowledge of mothers, but also shapes positive attitudes and behaviours towards breastfeeding. Repeated information can improve mothers' understanding and knowledge retention, so they are more confident and consistent in providing exclusive breastfeeding. Researchers also stressed the importance of counselling quality, where the role of the counsellor determines the success of communication and delivery of information that suits the mother's needs. Therefore, counselling skills training for health workers and the implementation of scheduled counselling according to WHO guidelines need to be a priority in efforts to increase exclusive breastfeeding coverage.

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## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of research and discussion regarding the relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding at UPTD Puskesmas Galang, it can be concluded that:

- There is a significant relationship between breastfeeding counselling and exclusive breastfeeding success at UPTD Puskesmas Galang, Batam City, Riau Islands Province.

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## Compliance with ethical standards

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### *Disclosure of conflict of interest*

Authors have no conflict of interest Statement of ethical approval (optional) (WJS-I-sub heading no numbering).

### *Statement of informed consent*

Prior to data collection, the researcher has explained to the respondent about the research to be carried out. If the respondent agreed, they were directed to sign a consent form and the respondent was given the right to withdraw if they felt disadvantaged.

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