

Original Research

Increased Success in Exclusive Breastfeeding with the Use of Guidelines for Lactation Cadre Assistance

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ABSTRACT

Background: The support of health cadres plays an important role in the success of the exclusive breastfeeding program. Health cadres have been widely involved in various activities carried out in the village, especially for maternal and child health programs, but for lactation cadre assistance to postpartum mothers is still not active because there are no lactation cadre assistance guidelines that can be used. The purpose of this study is to develop guidelines for assisting lactation cadres and assess their effectiveness in increasing the success of exclusive breastfeeding. **Methods:** This research is a Research and Development (R&D) research, starting with a literature study by studying journals and books related to health cadres and Exclusive Breastfeeding. Compile guidelines for assisting lactation cadres from the results of development. Data was collected using a questionnaire through FGD together with 50 health cadres, 2 village midwives and 3 representatives from the Magetan Regency Health Office, expert consuls followed by the revision and finalization of lactation cadre assistance guidelines. **Results:** This research produced guidelines for assisting lactation cadres, the results of the evaluation of guidelines for assisting lactation cadres through the process of development, formulation of strategic issues, and FGD. **Conclusions:** The guidebook for lactation cadres is a strategic step in supporting the success of the Exclusive Breastfeeding program so that it can increase the success of Exclusive Breastfeeding in the community.

Keywords: Guidelines; cadre; lactation; exclusive breastfeeding

1. INTRODUCTION

Exclusive breastfeeding is the most effective intervention to support children's growth and development, preventing an increase in morbidity and mortality rates in children.⁽¹⁻⁴⁾ The achievement of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia has decreased significantly in recent years.⁽⁵⁾ In 2021, less than half of babies in Indonesia (48.6%) were breastfed within the first hour of life, down from 58.2% in 2018. Only 52.5% were exclusively breastfed in the first six months, which is a sharp drop from 64.5% in 2018. Although the number of mothers who have breastfed their children in Indonesia is high (90%), only about 20% breastfeed exclusively for 6 months, even though breastfeeding is recommended for two years or more.⁽⁶⁾

The lack of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia is attributed to various factors. According to data from UNICEF and WHO, inadequate support for working mothers is one of the causes. Maternity leave policies and workplace regulations that do not support exclusive breastfeeding.⁽⁵⁾ Socio-cultural factors, such as imitating friends or feeling outdated, also play a role in lowering the rate of exclusive breastfeeding, as well as psychological factors and lack of

Motivation.⁽⁷⁾ The increasing promotion of formula milk and misinformation about breastfeeding are also barriers for mothers to provide exclusive breastfeeding. Awareness of the importance of breastfeeding, maternal confidence, knowledge of the benefits of breastfeeding, as well as family support, especially from husbands, are essential to increase the attainment of exclusive breastfeeding. Support from fellow mothers and better education about the importance of exclusive breastfeeding are also needed to address this issue.

The failure to achieve exclusive breastfeeding has a significant impact on the health and development of babies. Exclusive breast milk is a major source of nutrients that contain antibodies essential to protect babies from infections and diseases. Without exclusive breastfeeding, babies are at a higher risk of respiratory infections, diarrhea, and stunting, which can affect physical growth and cognitive development.^(7,8) In addition, the inability to achieve exclusive breastfeeding can reduce the emotional bond between mother and child, which is important for the psychological development of the baby.⁽⁹⁾

Health cadres play an important role in assisting breastfeeding mothers. The role of lactation cadres until now is still not optimal, this is characterized by the lack of involvement of cadres in providing an understanding of the correct procedures, positions and duration of breastfeeding, so that many breastfeeding mothers make mistakes in providing exclusive breastfeeding. Cadres and breastfeeding mothers do not understand lactation and alternatives to breast milk launchers. The role of cadres is needed as lactation consultants for breastfeeding mothers. Cadres are the closest people because they come from the community. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a guideline that can be used by cadres in providing assistance so that mothers succeed in providing exclusive breastfeeding. The purpose of this study is to develop guidelines for assisting lactation cadres.

2. METHODS

The method used in this study is research and development or commonly known as R&D (Research and Development). R&D is one of the research methods that has the goal of creating a specific product and testing the effectiveness of the product.⁽¹⁰⁻¹²⁾ This research is designed using a 4D development model (Four D). The 4D development model follows the flow

of Sivasailam Thiagarajan, Dorothy S. Semmel, and Melvyn I. Semmel in 1974. The model includes 4 stages, namely define, design, develop and disseminate.⁽¹³⁻¹⁴⁾ The application of the main steps in this study is not only according to the original version but is adjusted to the characteristics of the subject, the place of origin and the development needs in the field. The reason the researcher chose this model is because the 4D model is programmed in stages, simple, easy to understand and more systematic implementation.

In addition, this development model is usually used for the development of books or teaching materials. In this study, the identification of lactation cadre assistance guidelines was carried out, followed by the development, validity test and finalization of the preparation of lactation cadre assistance guidelines. This research was conducted in Jabung village and Ngiliran village, Panekan District, Magetan Regency. The population of this study is practitioners including posyandu cadres and village midwives as well as experts from the Health Office and module/guideline/supervisor experts totaling 50 people. The method of data collection begins with researchers conducting literature studies by studying journals and books related to health cadres and exclusive breastfeeding. Develop guidelines for assisting lactation cadres from development results. Data was collected using questionnaires through FGD with health cadres, village midwives and representatives of the Magetan Regency Health Office, expert consuls followed by the revision and finalization of lactation cadre assistance guidelines. Data analysis was carried out descriptively. The ethical feasibility test is carried out at the Surabaya Ministry of Health Polytechnic Ethics Unit with a certificate of ethical feasibility No.EA/1996/KEPK-Poltekkes_Sby/V/2023.

3. RESULTS

From several literatures, several points can be concluded for the evaluation of lactation cadre assistance guidelines (Table 1). There are 4 strategic issues in the development of lactation cadre assistance guidelines. 2% have an understanding that there are sentences that are not practical and are afraid of hurting mothers. 6% have the understanding that there are certain cases that require babies to get formula milk, for example babies with low birth weight and the increase in baby weight is not suitable/less. Adding motivation

that must be given to the family, especially grandmothers as an elderly person. 2% have the understanding that food points that can increase breast milk production are adjusted to local foods that are

often consumed. 2% have an understanding that material on exclusive breastfeeding is a long-standing theory.

Table 1. Evaluation of lactation cadre assistance guidelines

No.	Assessed aspects	Suitable		Not suitable	
		f	%	f	%
Content					
1	Background	49	98	1	2
2	Legal basis	50	100	0	0
3	Purpose of the guidelines	50	100	0	0
4	Benefits of guidelines	50	100	0	0
5	Guideline materials				
	a. Definition of exclusive breastfeeding	50	100	0	0
	b. Composition of breast milk	50	100	0	0
	c. Advantages and benefits of breastfeeding	50	100	0	0
	d. Breast milk needs	50	100	0	0
	e. Breastfeeding position and technique	50	100	0	0
	f. Support for breastfeeding mothers	50	100	0	0
	g. Mother's confidence in breastfeeding	50	100	0	0
	h. Motivation for exclusive breastfeeding	47	94	3	6
	i. How to increase breast milk production	49	98	1	2
	j. Breastfeeding problems in mothers and babies	50	100	0	0
	k. Exclusive breastfeeding preparation for working mothers	50	100	0	0
6	Method	50	100	0	0
7	Goal	50	100	0	0
8	Steps	50	100	0	0
9	Exclusive breastfeeding assessment instrument/format	50	100	0	0
Accuracy					
1	Accuracy of breastfeeding guidelines in health promotion	50	100	0	0
Ease					
1	Ease of use of guidelines for assisting lactation cadres	50	100	0	0
Time					
1	Up to date (novelty)	49	98	1	2

The development of lactation cadre assistance guidelines is carried out through FGD with toddler cadres as practitioners who will carry out assistance to postpartum mothers with the aim of exploring participants' opinions on the implementation of the use of lactation cadre assistance guidelines on the success of exclusive breastfeeding. The FGD was carried out with toddler cadres as practitioners followed by expert consultation to get input. The results of the FGD activities on the development of guidelines for assisting lactation cadres are explained in Table 2.

The recommendation from the FGD, change the sentence in the background with a more detailed explanation of the factors that hinder exclusive breastfeeding. Adding about the explanation that breast milk can be given to babies who are born normally and babies born with low birth weight at the point of breast milk needs. Additional information on the amount of breast milk that must be consumed by babies with low birth weight according to weight calculations. Adding local foods that can facilitate breast milk production according to the latest research results.

Table 2. Results of FGD activities on the development of lactation cadre assistance guidelines

No.	Strategic issues	Possible causes	FGD results	Researcher's study
Content				
1	2% have an understanding that there are sentences in the background that are less practical and afraid of hurting the mother	In the background is written the sentence that "some mothers are afraid that breastfeeding will be painful and impractical"	This sentence causes the mother to be offended because she is considered unwilling to struggle in breastfeeding	Change the sentence with a more detailed explanation of the factors that hinder exclusive breastfeeding
2	6% have the understanding that there are certain cases that require babies to get formula milk, for example babies with low birth weight and the baby's weight gain is not appropriate/less. Adding motivation that must be given to the family, especially grandmothers as elderly people (because there are still many customs that hinder exclusive breastfeeding)	There are several real cases in the field that do require babies to get formula milk (namely in the case of babies born with low birth weight and less weight gain). Grandmothers as the people who are raised in the family have a dominant influence in everything including the care of newborns (breastfeeding).	It is necessary to provide an explanation in the guideline material that breast milk can be given to babies born normally or babies born with low birth weight	Adding about the explanation that breast milk can be given to babies who are born normally and babies born with low birth weight at the point of breast milk needs. The addition of information on the amount of breast milk that must be consumed by babies with low birth weight according to the calculation of their body weight.
3	2% have an understanding that the food point that can increase breast milk production is adjusted to the local food that is often consumed	The explanation of how to increase breast milk production at food points that can facilitate breast milk is mentioned outmeal, almond milk which may still be rarely consumed because it is not widely found in the area	It is necessary to add a description of the local food menu that can facilitate breastfeeding and is easy to find	Adding local foods that can facilitate breast milk production according to the latest research results
Time				
1	2% have an understanding that material on exclusive breastfeeding is a long-standing theory	The material in the guidelines for assisting lactation cadres is not new	Although the material mostly uses old theories, judging from the preparation of the guidelines, it is new because there are no guidelines for assisting lactation cadres before, the content of the material is a collection of theories that can make it easier for cadres to understand and be used as guidelines in accompanying postpartum mothers	Guidelines for assisting lactation cadres need to be developed

4. DISCUSSION

In this study, the final results were found or obtained in the form of a lactation cadre assistance guidebook that can be used to assist postpartum mothers to succeed in providing exclusive breastfeeding. The manual has a crucial role in the process of transforming knowledge, attitudes, and skills.⁽¹⁵⁾ Manual guidance or structured guidance serves as an important tool in the process of transforming individual and organizational knowledge, attitudes, and skills. In the context of learning and self-development, manuals provide a systematic framework for achieving desired change.⁽¹⁶⁾ Manual guides often present information in an organized and easily accessible manner. This makes it easier for users to understand new concepts and apply them in their daily practice.⁽¹⁷⁾ For example, a manual can include specific steps to develop a new skill or change your attitude toward a problem. In addition to providing theoretical information, manual guides also serve as practical guidance for individuals or groups to implement necessary changes. With the concrete steps provided in the manual, users can take concrete actions that align with their development goals.⁽¹⁷⁾ Manual guides often come with self-evaluation tools such as questionnaires or checklists that allow individuals to evaluate their own progress in achieving specific learning goals. This helps users identify areas where they need to make further improvements. In situations when difficulties or challenges arise during the change process, the manual guide can act as a reference source to find solutions to the problem through case studies or real-life examples of best practices. The manual guides not only focus on technical skills but also seek to bridge attitude change through educational content based on positive values and personal reflection.⁽¹⁸⁾

As a structured and systematic source of information, the playbook provides a framework that can be followed to achieve the desired change. Additionally, the playbook also serves as a self-evaluation tool, allowing individuals to assess their own progress in acquiring new knowledge, changing attitudes, and improving skills.^(17,19,20) Thus, the playbook focuses not only on knowledge transfer or technical skill development, but also on the formation of attitudes and behaviors that support long-term growth and success. An effective playbook will inspire

aspirations and motivate action, helping to form a positive and proactive attitude towards learning and change. In practice, a good playbook will include real-life examples, case studies, and exercises that can strengthen theoretical understanding and encourage practical application. As such, the playbook becomes more than just a source of information, it is also a catalyst for meaningful and sustainable change.⁽¹⁹⁾

The lactation cadre assistance guidebook is an important tool for lactation cadres in supporting postpartum mothers to provide exclusive breastfeeding. The presence of comprehensive manuals, such as the lactation cadre assistance guidebook, provides the necessary information to ensure that mothers can breastfeed successfully. This book covers a variety of important topics, from the meaning of Exclusive Breastfeeding, the benefits of breastfeeding, the correct breastfeeding techniques, to how to overcome the problems that mothers and babies often face during the breastfeeding process. In addition, the manual also provides guidance on how to increase breast milk production, which is essential to meet the nutritional needs of babies exclusively.⁽¹⁹⁾ The existence of this guidebook not only serves as a source of information, but also as a practical guideline that helps lactation cadres in carrying out their duties. The lactation cadre assistance guidebook presents complete information about the benefits of breastfeeding, the correct breastfeeding technique, and how to overcome various challenges that may be faced by mothers while breastfeeding. With the right knowledge, lactation cadres can provide support and education to mothers more effectively.⁽²¹⁾ This lactation cadre mentoring guidebook includes specific steps and intervention strategies to help mothers in the breastfeeding process. For example, infant positioning techniques while breastfeeding or how to recognize signs of adequate breast milk intake in babies can be part of the material conveyed in it. In addition to breastfeeding techniques, this lactation cadre guidebook also explains the importance of psychological support for postpartum mothers. This includes how lactation cadres can provide encouragement, motivation and understand the feelings and worries experienced by new mothers after giving birth.⁽²²⁾ The lactation cadre assistance guidebook is also equipped with an evaluative tool in the form of a questionnaire or checklist for lactation cadres to assess the individual progress of each mother they assist. The lactation cadre mentoring guidebook

encourages the need for continuous training for lactation cadres so that they always receive the latest updates on best practices in supporting exclusive breastfeeding.⁽²³⁾

Assistance by a trained lactation cadre using a guidebook can increase mothers' confidence in breastfeeding, provide motivation, and emotional support needed during this important period. With clear guidelines, lactation cadres can provide consistent and scientific evidence-based guidance, which will ultimately contribute to an increase in the success rate of exclusive breastfeeding. Exclusive breastfeeding is not only beneficial for the baby's health but also helps in the formation of a bond between mother and child, which is an important aspect of the emotional and psychological health of both parties.⁽²⁴⁾ Breast milk contains all the nutrients needed by a newborn, including protein, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals. These nutrients are essential for the development of the baby's brain and immune system.⁽²⁵⁾ Exclusive breastfeeding has been proven to reduce the risk of respiratory infections, diarrhea, and other chronic diseases in children later in life.⁽²⁾ The breastfeeding process creates an intimate moment between mother and child. Skin-to-skin contact during breastfeeding helps strengthen the emotional connection between them.⁽²⁶⁾ Breastfeeding increases the production of hormones such as oxytocin in the mother which plays a role in stimulating feelings of love and attachment. It can also lower stress levels for both mother and baby.⁽²⁶⁾ Breastfeeding can also give a mother a sense of accomplishment and increase confidence in her ability to take care of her child.⁽²⁷⁾ Breastfeeding mothers tend to have a lower risk of developing postnatal depression compared to those who do not breastfeed.⁽²⁸⁾ Research shows that strong emotional bonds with parents in the early years of life can affect a child's long-term mental health, including the development of social and emotional skills.⁽²⁹⁾ The importance of social support from a partner or other family member also contributes to breastfeeding success as well as the quality of interaction between mother and child during the process. Thus, exclusive breastfeeding is not just an act of feeding; It is an integral process that supports physical health while also strengthening the emotional connection between mother and child.

In Indonesia, the Exclusive Breastfeeding program continues to be pushed as the gold standard in infant nutrition, so that manuals such as assistance for

lactation cadres have become very relevant. This helps in providing a reliable resource for lactation cadres working at various levels of healthcare, from community health centers to hospitals. Thus, this guidebook is not only a tool for lactation cadres but also an effort to increase the awareness and knowledge of the general public about the importance of Exclusive Breastfeeding.⁽²⁴⁾

The importance of this guidebook is also reflected in its availability in print and digital versions, making it easier to access for lactation cadres throughout Indonesia. With a good guidebook, it is hoped that there will be an increase in the practice of exclusive breastfeeding, which in turn will have a positive impact on reducing infant mortality and improving public health. The lactation cadre assistance guidebook is a step forward in supporting lactation cadres and postpartum mothers in their journey to provide a healthy start for future generations.⁽¹⁹⁾

5. CONCLUSION

The research has succeeded in developing a guidebook for lactation cadres which is a strategic step in supporting the success of the Exclusive Breastfeeding program. We recommend that these guidelines be more widely integrated into health cadre training programs. The use of guidelines for lactation cadre has been proven to increase the knowledge and skills of cadres in providing support to breastfeeding mothers, thereby contributing to an increase in the success rate of exclusive breastfeeding.

Ethics Approval

This research received ethical approval from Surabaya Ministry of Health Polytechnic Ethics Unit with a reference no. EA/1996/KEPK-Poltekkes_Sby/V/2023.

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Competing Interests

All the authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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Underlying Data

Derived data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author on request.

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