



# Antenatal counseling to ensure the quality of life of toddlers to be free from stunting towards a golden Indonesia in 2045

Susana Aditiya Wangsanata<sup>1</sup>, Maryatul Kibtyah<sup>2</sup>, Sucik Rahayu<sup>3</sup>,  
Ahmad Lukman Khakim<sup>4</sup>, Lari Andres Sanjaya<sup>5</sup>, Alfa Jauro<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1,3</sup>Sekolah Tinggi Islam Sunniyyah Selo, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Universitas Islam Negeri Walisongo, Indonesia

<sup>4</sup> Al-Azhar University, Al-Darb al-Ahmr, Cairo, Egypt

<sup>5</sup>School of Education, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Johor, Malaysia

<sup>6</sup>Madibbo Adma University of Technology (MAUTECH), Nigeria

Email: [sswangsanata5@gmail.com](mailto:sswangsanata5@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The purpose of this study was to determine the impact of antenatal counseling on the quality of life of toddlers in order to realize the golden generation in 2045 in Indonesia.

**Method** - This research method is library research, which is collecting various library data to solve stunting problems in Indonesia. Data collection techniques are collecting and identifying documents, reading and analyzing documents, synthesis and analysis, then drawing conclusions. The data analysis technique uses content analysis, which is an in-depth discussion of the contents of written information on the data that has been collected..

**Result** - The results of this study found that antenatal counseling can be an alternative solution to the problem of stunting in Indonesia. This is proven by several indicators, including, during antenatal counseling, pregnant women gain insight into PHBS during pregnancy. With PHBS insight, it can guarantee the quality of life during pregnancy and post-pregnancy. By maintaining PHBS during pregnancy and post-pregnancy, it can minimize toddler infections that interfere with digestion, causing nutritional failure and resulting in stunting.

**Implication** – Antenatal counseling has an impact on the insight of pregnant women about the procedures for Clean and Healthy Lifestyle (PHBS) during pregnancy and post-pregnancy. By knowing the insight of PHBS, it can prevent infections in toddlers so that it can guarantee a good quality of life.

**Originality** – Antenatal counseling provides knowledge for pregnant women on how to maintain physical and mental condition during pregnancy. This research is a research that has never been published in any form.

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\***Corresponding author:** Susana Aditiya Wangsanata, [sswangsanata5@gmail.com](mailto:sswangsanata5@gmail.com), Sekolah Tinggi Islam Sunniyyah Selo, Indonesia.

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**Abstract**

**Tujuan** - Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dampak konseling antenatal terhadap kualitas hidup balita dalam rangka mewujudkan generasi emas pada tahun 2045 di Indonesia.

**Metode** - Metode penelitian ini adalah penelitian kepustakaan, yaitu mengumpulkan berbagai data kepustakaan untuk memecahkan masalah stunting di Indonesia. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan mengumpulkan dan mengidentifikasi dokumen, membaca dan menganalisis dokumen, sintesis dan analisis, kemudian menarik kesimpulan. Teknik analisis data menggunakan analisis isi, yaitu pembahasan mendalam terhadap isi suatu informasi tertulis atas data yang telah dikumpulkan.

**Hasil** - Hasil penelitian ini menemukan bahwa konseling antenatal dapat menjadi salah satu alternatif solusi bagi permasalahan stunting di Indonesia. Hal ini dibuktikan dengan beberapa indikator, diantaranya, pada saat konseling antenatal, ibu hamil mendapatkan wawasan tentang PHBS selama kehamilan. Dengan adanya wawasan PHBS, maka dapat menjamin kualitas hidup selama kehamilan dan pasca kehamilan. Dengan menjaga PHBS selama kehamilan dan pasca kehamilan, dapat meminimalisir infeksi balita yang mengganggu pencernaan sehingga menyebabkan gagal gizi dan mengakibatkan stunting.

**Implikasi** - Konseling antenatal berdampak pada wawasan ibu hamil tentang tata cara Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat (PHBS) selama kehamilan dan pasca kehamilan. Dengan mengetahui wawasan PHBS, maka dapat mencegah terjadinya infeksi pada balita sehingga dapat menjamin kualitas hidup yang baik.

**Keaslian** - Konseling antenatal memberikan pengetahuan kepada ibu hamil tentang bagaimana menjaga kondisi fisik dan mental selama kehamilan. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian yang belum pernah dipublikasikan dalam bentuk apapun.

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## **Introduction**

The problem of stunting is an important issue of study because it has not been solved until now. The government needs a new breakthrough to reduce the number of stunting in Indonesia. This breakthrough can be through antenatal counseling for pregnant women. Health workers (midwives and doctors) have an important role in providing antenatal counseling. According to Permenkes No. 28 of 2017 article 19 paragraph 2, one of the health services for pregnant women is antenatal in normal pregnancies. (Anon 2017). Previous research has shown that over the past few decades the stunting rate has remained high and continues to increase. (Renggli et al. 2021). Therefore, antenatal counseling is an important service to prevent stunting because pregnant women get information and knowledge about their pregnancy health. Given that the low knowledge factor of mothers, the risk of toddlers experiencing stunting is greater (Dwi Yanti, Betriana, and Rahmayunia Kartika 2020). The aim of antenatal counseling is to increase pregnant women's knowledge about the nutrition that needs to be prepared during pregnancy (Isnaini, Mariza, and Putri 2022).

In Indonesia, awareness of counseling services is still relatively low. This is evidenced by the low interest of pregnant women in Indonesia to consult with midwives or obstetricians. Usually, pregnancy consultations are only carried out if there is a problem that is considered serious by the pregnant woman. Stunting is a form of abnormality experienced by toddlers who do not grow according to their age. Specifically, stunting is a condition in which a toddler's body is short compared to their age. (Abdat et al. 2020). The real form of antenatal counseling can be seen from family planning services including counseling, basic contraception, vasectomy and tubectomy. (Panduan Praktis Pelayanan BPJS Kesehatan, 2014). Antenatal counseling as a form of implementation of Presidential Decree No. 72 of 2021 concerning the acceleration of stunting reduction, especially in Article 2 paragraph 2 point (b), namely improving the quality of preparation for family life. Point (c) ensures the fulfillment of nutritional intake, point (d) improves parenting patterns, point (e) improves access and quality of health services (Perpres 2021).

The importance of antenatal counseling is based on several schemes: first, one of the causes of stunting is the low maternal education factor. Research results show that the stunting rate in Southeast Asia is one of the causes of low maternal education, which increases the risk of toddlers experiencing stunting by 1.67 times (Apriluana and Fikawati 2018:247). Second, low maternal education has an impact on poor lifestyle during and after pregnancy. For example, poor sanitation causes diarrhea, worms, and Environmental Enteric Dysfunction (EED) (Olo, Mediani, and Rakhmawati 2021:1114). Poor knowledge about sanitation can cause toddlers to experience malnutrition, which can disrupt toddler growth or cause stunting (Prasetyo and Asfur 2020:18). Antenatal counseling provides knowledge about sanitation, such as keeping the environment clean so that toddlers can avoid infection (Zairinayati and Purnama 2019:90). Information about healthy sanitation is obtained through assistance with hygiene practices, counseling and PHBS education (Dewi et al. 2021:691). Third, the low level of maternal education influences the understanding of providing nutritional intake to toddlers (Khoiron et al. 2022:98). If toddlers are given food other than breast milk before the age of 6 months, it will be dangerous for their digestion (Wardani et al. 2022:16). Thus, a clean and healthy lifestyle is a behavior that is carried out with awareness by oneself and society so that a healthy environment will be created (Tedy Tulak, Yuhanah, and Sangkala 2021).

Previous research says that the importance of measuring the quality of life of toddlers is increasingly recognized and the influence of the quality of life of toddlers will have an impact on physical, emotional, social and environmental functions. In other words, toddlers who have a low quality of life are less fortunate than other toddlers with a good level of quality of life (Connery et al. 2021). Thus, if antenatal counseling is not provided, it will have an impact on the poor quality of life of toddlers. Thus, there is a gap between theory and practice in the field. In theory, antenatal counseling is very beneficial for pregnant women to ensure the quality of life during and after pregnancy. However, this is contrary to the facts in the field which show that the stunting rate in Indonesia is still high. The Ministry of Health through its official website reports that the stunting rate in 2021 was 24.4% and decreased to 21.6% in 2022 (Kemenkes.go.id 2023). Although the stunting rate has decreased, it has not yet managed to reach below 20%. WHO said that the stunting percentage above 20% is still in the high category (Fitri et al. 2022:80). Seeing the gap, the latest alternative that can be done is optimizing antenatal counseling for pregnant women, because this service is free facilitated by BPJS Health. It is clearly stated that JKN-KIS holders managed by BPJS also get counseling services, drug provision, family planning and installation of contraceptives (Mizranda 2021:01). This is in accordance with Presidential Decree No. 19 of 2016 which states that family planning services include counseling and contraceptive services including vasectomy and tubectomy (Perpres, 2016). In a study entitled "Childhood stunting: a global perspective" it was shown that the incidence of stunting in children worldwide was 161 million children in the world in 2013 (Onis, 2016).

The framework of this research is seen from: first, the still high stunting rate in Indonesia which is caused by the lack of assurance of the quality of life of toddlers during and after pregnancy. Second, the low level of education of pregnant women in Indonesia and the lack of understanding of PHBS. Third, education factors, nutritional intake, and poor sanitation are the causes of stunting. To overcome this, the Indonesian Ministry of Health through the KB program has provided antenatal counseling services, to open the insights and knowledge of pregnant women in maintaining a lifestyle during and after pregnancy. With the antenatal counseling service program, it is clear and real that the benefits of the program are extraordinary in fighting stunting to create a golden generation in 2045. Where Indonesia will get a demographic bonus with the most productive age. Therefore, to get a golden generation, it is necessary to prepare starting from early antenatal counseling services.

## Research Methods

This research method is literature. This type of research collects information and data by collecting various kinds of library materials to solve the problems being studied by researchers. Data collection techniques are carried out by documentation, namely searching for research variables through books, journals, and other reliable data sources (Sari and Asmendri 2020:45–53). The analysis technique used is content analysis. This analysis has the nature of an in-depth discussion of the contents of written information in print and electronic media. Data processing uses symbol coding techniques. This technique records various messages systematically which are then interpreted (Asfar and Taufan 2019:02).

## Results and Discussion

Antenatal counseling is a visit by pregnant women to health workers (midwives and doctors) to get antenatal care (Lestari, Puteri, and Zurrahmi 2021:06). Antenatal counseling is regular pregnancy check-ups or monitoring during pregnancy (Aulya et al. 2022:464–65). Antenatal counseling helps in choosing

contraception to increase pregnant women's knowledge about the risks, benefits and side effects of contraception (Riawanti and Pusparini 2018:119). Antenatal counseling is in line with the counseling theory defined by the American Counseling Association (ACA) that counseling is a professional relationship to empower various individuals, families and groups to achieve mental health, well-being, career and education. Counseling is assistance provided by counselors to clients to provide direction and guidance on how to think and behave (Evita, and Wiryo, 2020:54). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) defines counseling as a direct, confidential, accepting relationship that enables clients to overcome the problems they face (Farziah 2019:02). The American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA) defines counseling as a professional relationship between a counselor and a client who needs help due to anxiety, conflict or decision making (Widiasari, Susiati, and Saputra 2016:62). The antenatal counseling process aims to build trust with pregnant women to obtain important information about pregnancy and toddler care procedures (Bartlett et al. 2023).

In Indonesia, the counselor profession is under the auspices of ABKIN (Indonesian Counseling Guidance Association), which explains that the educational background of counselors has academic competence in counseling services so that they are able to provide good services (Hotmauli 2021:606). Schertzer and Stone define counseling as an effort to provide assistance to clients through personal interaction so that clients can understand themselves and their environment so that clients get happiness. Jones argues that counseling is an activity that collects all the facts to focus on certain problems so that clients can overcome them themselves. Prayitno and Erman Amti say that counseling is providing assistance to clients who have problems so that their problems can be resolved (Sugiarto, Prayitno, and Karneli 2021:28).

Kusyanti's research results show that antenatal counseling has been carried out but has not been carried out by all midwives. Meanwhile, not all general practitioners have provided counseling (Kusyanti 2022a:144). The results of Putri et al.'s research show that pregnant women who never undergo antenatal counseling will have an impact on the lack of nutritional information received by pregnant women, which can cause stunting in toddlers (Putri 2020:01). The results of Hutasoit et al.'s research show that antenatal counseling has a significant relationship with the incidence of stunting, as seen from the p value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). With a close relationship, the correlation coefficient value is  $(r) = 0.389$  (Hutasoit, Utami, and Afriyiliani 2020:01). The results of research by Syatriani et al. show that the factor that influences stunting is antenatal counseling (Syatriani, Pawenrusi, and Syahrir 2022:696). Hendarwan's research results show that as many as 20.4% of health centers have equipment, medicines, and media for 9T ANC visits (Hendarwan 2018:97).

The government program, especially for handling stunting cases in Indonesia with all the facilities provided, will make it easier for participants to get maximum and comprehensive health services as one of the indicators of ensuring the quality of life of pregnant women. By ensuring the quality of life of participants, it will minimize the risk of various disorders or diseases such as stunting. WHO said that Indonesia ranks third with stunting cases in Southeast Asia. The latest data on the number of stunting in 2020 was 27.7% (Rohmah and Arifah 2021:96). Then the target of the National Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMN) policy for 2020-2024 is to increase quality and highly competitive human resources. To achieve this target, one of the efforts made by the government is to accelerate nutritional improvements in dealing with stunting. The target that is expected to be achieved in 2024 is that the stunting rate will be 14% (Himawati, Wigati, and Azizah 2022:28).

In order to achieve a stunting rate of 14% by 2024, one way is to provide an antenatal counseling program. This counseling ensures the health of pregnant women and the growth and development of toddlers, then maintains physical, mental, social health and recognizes complications early on (Nainggolan and Harista 2021:129). Meanwhile, according to PedsQl (Pediatric Quality of Life), the quality of life in children can be seen through four main functions, namely physical, emotional, social and school functions. Physical function is seen from normal physical according to age, emotional function is seen from the child's psychological response, social function is seen from interaction with the environment and school function is seen from how the child's cognitive development is (Hendrawati, Mediani, and Salsabila 2023:1327). Thus, it is clear that the antenatal counseling program is able to be an alternative solution to the problem of stunting in toddlers in Indonesia to create a golden generation in 2045.

Quality of life according to WHO is an individual's view of their position in society in the context of local values, customs and culture and has expectations which are a multidimensional view and are not limited to the physical, but also psychological (Hendrawati et al. 2023:1329). Quality of life issues are very broad and complex, including physical, psychological and social health problems (Ariyanto, Cinta, and Utami 2020:146). According to WHOQoL (World Health Organization Quality of Life), physical health is the most important indicator (Adityo, Romadhon, and Ardiyanto 2013:6).

In the context of this research, poor quality of life will have an impact on nutritional problems and cause stunting in toddlers (Azriful et al. 2018:192). Previous research shows that one form of poor quality of life is chronic malnutrition due to repeated infections in the first 1,000 days of a toddler's life (Suwarno et al. 2022:81). Pregnant women need supervision during pregnancy, proper delivery process, supervision during the postpartum period, and readiness in providing breast milk is very important in order to become a quality human being (Udu et al. 2019:34). If there is a disruption in fulfilling the nutritional needs of toddlers, it will cause the toddler's quality of life to be less than optimal and can even result in death (Kurniasih 2016:19).

Antenatal counseling is counseling that provides assistance to pregnant women in choosing contraception. The goal is to increase the knowledge of pregnant women about the risks, benefits and side effects of contraceptives. (Riawanti and Pusparini 2018:119). A good quality of life can be fulfilled by toddlers if their parents have good insight to fulfill good nutrition and sanitation. To be able to fulfill good nutrition and sanitation, one thing that can be done by pregnant women is to do antenatal counseling. By doing antenatal counseling, the insight of pregnant women will increase so that it has an impact on pregnancy care patterns. After being able to know the pregnancy care pattern well, then after giving birth they will be able to care for toddlers with a healthy lifestyle, so that it will minimize the risk of stunting toddlers. Thus, in 2045 a golden generation will be created with physical and spiritual health. This is because the growth and development of toddlers whose quality of life is guaranteed, so that they will become quality humans in 2045. In 2045 Indonesia will get a demographic bonus, namely the total population of all Indonesian people is in the productive period, which is around 2/3 of the total population of Indonesia (Qomariyah 2023:181).

Antenatal counseling services have been proven to have a positive impact on the health of pregnant women in improving healthy living behavior (Firrahmawati and Kustiyati 2017:109). With the positive impact, it will be an indicator of the guaranteed quality of life of toddlers. Optimization of antenatal counseling can be seen from the scope of K1 and K4. K1 is the beginning of pregnant women checking their pregnancy, while K4 is the 4th check-up. By seeing whether pregnant women check their

pregnancy up to K4 or not, it can be used as a picture of the compliance of pregnant women in undergoing pregnancy to health workers (Cahyani 2020:77).

In the first 1,000 days of a toddler's life, it will greatly determine the quality of life of the newborn toddler. Therefore, if the mother's insight and knowledge are low, so that the toddler experiences chronic malnutrition, there will be a risk of the toddler becoming stunted (Ngaisyah 2016:52). Fulfilling nutritional needs in toddlers will trigger toddler growth and development according to age and can improve quality of life and prevent morbidity and mortality (Ngaisyah 2015:69). The biggest threat if a toddler experiences stunting is the quality of life in the future, especially because of stunted physical growth, stunted brain growth, which will have an impact on decreasing the quality of learning which will ultimately result in decreased productivity in adulthood (Apriluana and Fikawati 2018:29).

Poor quality of life of toddlers can be characterized by a lack of nutritional intake during toddlerhood before the age of 2 years. On the official website of the directorate of early childhood education based on the results of the national nutritional status survey, data on stunted children in Indonesia in 2022 was 21.6% (PAUD 2023). The data is relevant to data from the Ministry of Health which is presented on its official website that in 2022 the stunting rate will drop to 21.6% from 37% in 2014. Then in 2024 the target that must be achieved is 14%. The problem of stunting is not only physical, but also affects learning ability and chronic diseases that can easily enter a child's body (said the President) (BKPK 2023).

Antenatal counseling aims to provide knowledge for pregnant women about the condition of the womb and lifestyle during pregnancy. By conducting antenatal counseling, the risk of death for pregnant women can be reduced (Eppang 2020). The important role of antenatal counseling is to build good communication relationships between health workers and users of antenatal counseling services or in this case pregnant women (Kusyanti 2022). Thus, antenatal counseling can be one of the breakthroughs in solving stunting problems in Indonesia. However, in the antenatal counseling program, of course there are obstacles in it. One of the most basic obstacles is the lack of awareness of pregnant women to carry out routine antenatal counseling during pregnancy. Awareness of pregnant women during pregnancy is very necessary to provide knowledge about the sensitive period of pregnancy. The lack of awareness to carry out routine antenatal counseling is also influenced by the education factor of pregnant women. Low education factors can also have an impact on the quality of life of pregnant women. Thus, it can be found that there is a causal relationship so that it continues like a food chain. Therefore, the solution provided by the government together with the community is responsible for ensuring that pregnant women have easy and quality access from pregnancy to childbirth (Febriati and Novika 2021).

With the existence of the antenatal counseling program above, it can be one of the determinants of the quality and progress of the nation. Good quality of the nation comes from the level of quality of Human Resources whose lives are guaranteed. The quality of life that begins from the womb will have an impact on the process of physical and psychological growth of humans. In 2045, pregnant women or toddlers will be 20-25 years old. The age of 20-25 years is a very productive age so that it can be used as basic capital for building the progress of the nation. Therefore, the quality of Human Resources must be guaranteed from the womb and toddler age. One example of a good quality of life is by implementing a Clean and Healthy Lifestyle (PHBS) during pregnancy and after giving birth. PHBS also needs to be balanced with the fulfillment of adequate nutrition, so that toddlers can grow perfectly. Where food factors and infectious diseases are nutritional problems that need to be addressed (Arisca 2021).

## Conclusion

JAGC | 82 Antenatal counseling has a very positive impact on the quality of life of pregnant and postpartum mothers. This is because antenatal counseling provides information about PHBS during pregnancy, such as nutritional and sanitation needs. Nutrition and sanitation are two main indicators of the risk of stunting. Considering that the data on stunting cases in 2022 was 21.6%, it is said to be still high because WHO states that the figure is below 20% for the category of countries that have successfully resolved stunting cases. A good quality of life can be achieved by pregnant women by conducting antenatal counseling, so that they can properly care for their toddlers and minimize infections that cause failure to meet nutritional needs and result in the risk of stunting.

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