

MOTHERS' KNOWLEDGE LEVEL ABOUT THE GOLD STANDARD OF BABY FOOD

Nabila Abida Masyhar, Yuni Puji Widiastuti*, Riani Pradara Jati, Muhammad Khabib Burhanuddin Iqomh
Nursing of Study Program, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Kesehatan Kendal, Jln Laut 31, Kendal, Jawa Tengah 51311, Indonesia
[*widiardana@yahoo.com](mailto:widiardana@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

Nutritional issues in infants and children remain a government concern, particularly the issue of stunting. The gold standard for infant food is a fundamental step to improving the health of infants and children, starting with Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding after the baby is 6 months old, and continued breastfeeding until at least 2 years of age. One effort to prevent stunting is by providing the gold standard for infant food. This is in accordance with recommendations from WHO and UNICEF. However, not all mothers provide the recommended gold standard for infant food. One of the causes is a lack of knowledge. The purpose of this study was to determine the level of maternal knowledge about the gold standard for infant food. This research method uses quantitative descriptive. The population of this study were mothers with children aged 6 months to 2 years. A sample of 54 respondents was taken using a total sampling technique. The data collection tool used a questionnaire. Data analysis used descriptive statistics. The characteristics of the respondents were: the majority or average age is 23 years (16.7%), the majority of whom had a high school education 39 respondent (72.2%), the majority of whom were unemployed 32 respondent (59.3%), and the majority of whom had a high income of \geq Rp2,379,702 are 30 respondent (55.6%). The results of the study showed that all respondents had knowledge in the good category (100%). Food is an important part of child growth and development, especially in the early stages of growth and development. Parental knowledge about nutrition will play a significant role in fulfilling nutritional needs for children. The government, in this case the community health center, can provide health education about the importance of providing gold standard baby food consistently and sustainably. Future researchers can examine how the implementation of nutritional provision for newborns up to 2 years old according to the gold standard of baby food.

Keywords: mothers' knowledge; knowledge; the gold standart of baby food

INTRODUCTION

Nutritional issues in infants and children remain a major concern for governments at both the global and national levels, particularly stunting. One of the root causes of nutritional and health issues in infants and children is inappropriate Infant and Child Feeding (IYCF) (Kasma, 2023). IYCF is a highly recommended gold standard because it can reduce child mortality and improve maternal quality (Siahaan and Tasmi, 2022). Initial breastfeeding (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding, and the provision of diverse, adequate, safe, and age-appropriate complementary foods will promote optimal growth and development. However, suboptimal feeding practices are a major cause of malnutrition in infants and children (Kasma, 2023; Rakotomanana, Hildebrand, Gates, Thomas, Fawbush, & Stoecker, 2020). One consequence of malnutrition is stunting.

According to the 2023 Indonesian Health Survey, the national stunting prevalence was 21.5%, down by about 0.8% compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, in Central Java, the stunting rate was 20.7%, and in Batang Regency, 10.79% were stunted. Batang ranked 17th in Central Java. According to the Indonesian Health Profile (2023), the percentage of newborns receiving Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD) nationally is 86.6%. The province with the highest percentage of newborns receiving IMD is Papua Pegunungan Province (100%), and the province with the lowest percentage is Bali Province (66.5%). Meanwhile, the coverage of 6-month-old babies receiving exclusive breastfeeding is 63.9%. The highest percentage of exclusive breastfeeding coverage is in West Nusa Tenggara Province (81.1%), while the lowest percentage is in West Papua Province (10.9%).

Menurut Profil Kesehatan Indonesia (2023) persentase bayi baru lahir yang mendapat Inisiasi Menyusu Dini (IMD) secara nasional sebesar 86,6%. Provinsi dengan presentase bayi baru lahir mendapat IMD tertinggi adalah Provinsi Papua Pegunungan (100%) dan Provinsi dengan persentase terendah adalah Provinsi Bali (66,5%).

Sedangkan cakupan bayi berusia 6 bulan mendapat ASI eksklusif yaitu sebesar 63,9%. Persentase cakupan pemberian ASI eksklusif tertinggi di Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Barat (81,1%), sedangkan persentase terendah di Provinsi Papua Barat (10,9%).

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommend the Infant and Young Child Feeding policy, also known as the Gold Standard for Infant and Young Child Feeding, which includes: Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD), Exclusive Breastfeeding for 6 months, Complementary Feeding after 6 months, and continued breastfeeding until the child is 2 years old or older (WHO, 2018). This aligns with the Global Strategy on Infant and Child Feeding, which regulates the best feeding patterns for infants from birth to 2 years of age.

There are many benefits of the gold standard of baby food, starting from the benefits of IMD, namely transferring good bacteria from the mother's skin to the baby, the baby's breathing and heart rate are more stable, warming the baby, bonding between the baby and the mother, making the baby calm. Furthermore, the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding are that breast milk is easily digested and absorbed efficiently, increases the body's immune system, strives for optimal growth, strives for maximum brain development, increases bonding with the mother. Furthermore, the benefits of MPASI are as a source of energy, as a supporter of brain and physical development, introduces tastes, textures and food variants, trains the baby's ability, both in chewing and swallowing as well as the ability to recognize textures and tastes in food. Breastfeeding for at least two years of age is considered to be a very high vitamin C content, which plays a role in boosting the baby's immune system and fostering a bond between mother and baby (Ministry of Health, 2021). While there are numerous benefits to the gold standard for baby food, not all mothers provide it as recommended, one reason being a lack of knowledge. The purpose of this study was to determine mothers' level of knowledge regarding the gold standard for baby food.

Based on interviews with several mothers with babies aged 6 months to 2 years, it was found that 4 out of 10 said they didn't know enough about early initiation of breastfeeding, 2 still didn't know how to provide exclusive breastfeeding, and 4 didn't fully understand complementary feeding (MPASI). Therefore, it is important to understand mothers' understanding of the gold standard for baby food. This study aimed to determine mothers' level of knowledge about the gold standard for baby food.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive study with a cross-sectional approach. The population in this study were mothers with children aged 6 months to 2 years in Madugowongjati Village, totaling 54 respondents. The sample of 54 respondents used a total sampling technique. Data collection used a questionnaire including a questionnaire on respondent characteristics and a questionnaire on the level of knowledge about the gold standard of baby food, consisting of 29 questions. The questionnaire has been tested for validity and reliability. Data analysis used univariate analysis using descriptive statistics presented in the form of frequencies and percentages.

RESULT

Table 1.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Age (n=54)

Characteristics	Median	Modus	Std.Deviation	Minimum-Max
Age	25	23	4	17-39

Based on table 4.1, the characteristics of respondents based on age can be seen that the majority of respondents were 23 years old, the youngest respondent was 17 years old, while the oldest was 39 years old.

Based on table 2. It can be seen that the majority of respondents have a high school education, namely 39 (72.2%) respondents, the majority are not working, namely 32 (59.3%) respondents, the majority have a high income or earnings of \geq Rp. 2,379,702, namely 30 (55.6%) respondents.

Table 2.
 Characteristics Based on Education, Occupation (n=54)

Characteristics	f	%
Education		
Elementary School	1	1,9
Middle School	5	9,3
High School	39	72,2
College	9	16,7
Work		
Unemployed	32	59,3
Selfemploye	1	1,9
Labor	15	27,8
Teacher	6	11,1
Income		
1. ≥Rp. 2,783,455 (high)	24	44,4
2. <Rp 2,783,455 (low)	30	55,6

Table 3.
 Level of Mothers' Knowledge About the Gold Standard of Baby Food

Knowledge	f	%
High	54	100
Rendah	0	0

Table 3, it can be seen that all 54 respondents (100%) had a good level of knowledge about the gold standard for baby food.

Table 4.
 Distribution of respondents' answers regarding Early Breastfeeding Initiation (IMD)

No	Question	Answer			
		True		false	
		f	%	f	%
1	Early Initiation of Breastfeeding, namely the baby is allowed to find his mother's nipple to breastfeed immediately after birth.	52	96,3	2	3,7
2	IMD means that the baby must be given his first breast milk immediately after birth or a maximum of 1 hour after birth.	54	100,0	0	0
3	The benefits of early breastfeeding initiation for babies include the transfer of good bacteria from the mother's skin to the baby.	50	92,6	4	7,4
4	The benefits of early breastfeeding initiation for mothers include preventing postpartum bleeding.	50	92,6	4	7,4
5	Family or husband support is not a factor that can influence the implementation of IMD.	38	70,4	16	29,6
6	The steps for IMD are to dry the baby as quickly as possible, especially the head, without removing the vernix from the baby's mouth and nose. Then the baby is placed face down on the mother's chest and let the baby find the nipple on his own.	54	100,0	0	0

Based on table 4, it can be seen that there are still 2 (3.7%) mothers who do not know that early initiation of breastfeeding means that the baby is allowed to look for the mother's nipple to breastfeed immediately after birth.

Based on Table 5, it can be seen that the majority of respondents, 40 respondents (74.2%), did not fully understand the importance of exclusive breastfeeding. Furthermore, 44 respondents (81.5%) did not yet understand the benefits of breastfeeding in accelerating the return of the uterus to its pre-pregnancy size.

Table 5.
Distribution of respondents' answers regarding exclusive breastfeeding

No	question	Answer			
		True		False	
		f	%	f	%
7	Exclusive breastfeeding is giving breast milk with additional water until the age of 6 months.	40	74,2	14	25,9
8	The advantage of babies who are given exclusive breastfeeding is that exclusive breastfeeding can reduce the number of infants who are sick and die.	54	100,0	0	0
9	The benefits of exclusive breastfeeding include increasing body resistance, maximizing brain development, and increasing bonding with the mother.	54	100,0	0	0
10	The benefit of breastfeeding for mothers is that it slows down the process of the uterus returning to its original size.	44	81,5	10	18,5
11	Creating a comfortable environment while breastfeeding is a way to ensure smooth breast milk flow.	52	96,3	2	3,7
12	The contents of breast milk are water, protein, carbohydrates, fat, enzymes.	53	98,1	1	1,9
13	Colostrum breast milk is a thick, yellowish liquid produced on the first to third day.	54	100,0	0	0
14	Mature breast milk is breast milk that comes out after the tenth day after birth and is thick white in color.	49	90,7	5	9,3

Table 6.
Distribution of respondents' answers regarding complementary foods for breast milk

No	Question	Answer			
		True		False	
		f	%	f	%
15	Complementary foods are given when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient to meet the baby's nutritional needs.	39	72,2	15	27,8
16	Complementary food is additional food given to children when they are 6 months old.	54	100,0	0	0
17	After the child is given complementary foods, it is no longer mandatory to give them breast milk again.	46	85,2	8	14,8
18	Providing a variety of flavors and types of healthy food is a healthy food strategy for babies.	54	100,0	0	0
19	The complementary food given to children must be varied, consisting of staple foods, animal and vegetable side dishes, vegetables and fruit.	53	98,1	1	1,9
20	The benefits of MP-ASI as a supporter of brain and physical development, introducing taste, texture and food variants, training the baby's ability to chew and swallow	52	96,3	2	3,7
21	Giving complementary food before the age of 6 months will not disrupt digestion such as diarrhea.	37	68,5	17	31,5
22	When a baby is 6 months old or older, breast milk alone is sufficient to meet nutritional needs.	45	83,3	9	16,7
23	Providing complementary food for children aged 6-9 months, namely thick porridge texture	52	96,3	2	3,7
24	Providing complementary food for 9-12 month olds is finely chopped food, coarsely chopped food, or food that the child can hold.	54	100,0	0	0
25	Providing complementary food for children aged 12 months - 24 months is family food that is mashed or chopped as needed.	50	92,6	4	7,4

Based on table 6, it can be seen that there are still 15 (27.8%) mothers who do not know about MPASI, namely complementary foods given when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient for the baby's nutritional needs. Also in number 17, there are still 46 (85.2%) mothers who do not understand that after the child is given MPASI, the child must still be given breast milk until the age of at least 2 years. In number 21, there are still 37 (68.5%) mothers who still do not understand that giving MPASI before the age of 6 months can disrupt digestion such as diarrhea. And in number 22, there are still 45 (83.3%) mothers who do not understand that when the baby is 6 months old, breast milk alone is not enough to meet nutritional needs.

Table 7.
 Distribution of respondents' answers regarding breastfeeding until a minimum age of 2 years

No	Question	Answer			
		True		False	
		f	%	f	%
26	When a baby or child has been given complementary food, breastfeeding should be continued until the child is at least 2 years old.	51	94,4	3	5,6
27	Mothers should not give breast milk for more than 2 years	19	35,2	35	64,8
28	If breast milk is not given until the age of 2 years, the baby or child will experience less than optimal brain growth and development and is even susceptible to stunting.	48	88,9	6	11,1
29	The benefit of giving breast milk until the age of at least 2 years is because breast milk still provides nutritional intake to babies in addition to complementary foods.	52	96,3	2	3,7

Based on table 7, it can be seen that in number 27 there are still 19 (35.2%) mothers who do not know that mothers can provide breast milk for more than 2 years and in number 28 there are still 48 (88.9%) mothers who do not understand that if breast milk is not given until the age of 2 years, it will have an impact on the growth and development of the baby's or child's brain, making it less than optimal and even prone to stunting.

DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Respondents Based on Age

The study found that the majority of mothers with children aged 6 months to 2 years in Madugowongjati Village were 23 years old (16.7%). This aligns with research conducted by Siahaan & Tasmi (2022), which found that the majority of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 35, representing 34 (82.9%). The age range for early adulthood is 23. This phase is when individuals are ready to take on roles, assume responsibilities, and occupy positions in society. Early adulthood is also synonymous with work, social engagement, and developing relationships with the opposite sex, such as marriage and childbearing (Putri, 2019).

Age is the period of life measured from birth to one's last birthday. A person is considered an adult when they reach 18 years of age, entering a productive phase and beginning to face various developmental challenges. In relation to knowledge, as one ages, one's perspective becomes more open and experiences increase, as a result of growing psychological maturity. However, with advancing age, the ability to remember information tends to decline (Notoatmodjo, 2018). The age of 23 is considered early adulthood. This phase is when individuals are ready to take on roles, assume responsibilities, and occupy positions in society. Early adulthood is also synonymous with work, social activity, and building relationships with the opposite sex, such as marriage and having children (Putri, 2019).

According to research by Sari, Basuki, & Triastuti (2016), mothers aged 21-30, who fall into the early adulthood category, are in their productive phase. During this period, they have relatively easy access to information, have good comprehension skills, and understand what is conveyed more easily. According to the researchers' analysis, the age of 23 is considered early adulthood, which is the age when a mother is ready to marry and start a family. Therefore, when a child is born, a mother is ready and understands the necessary steps, especially regarding providing the gold standard for baby food. According to the researcher's analysis, the age of 23 is considered to be early adulthood, which is the age at which a mother is ready to marry and build a family, so that when she has a child, the mother is ready and understands the things that must be done, especially regarding providing the gold standard of baby food.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Education

Education is an effort to develop one's personality through the learning process, both formal and informal. Education also influences a person's perspective in making decisions and determining their lifestyle. The higher a person's level of education, the broader their horizons tend to be (Notoatmodjo, 2018). Mothers play a crucial role in determining the types of food consumed by their families. Therefore, the higher the level of education attained, the more optimal their ability to meet the family's nutritional needs, particularly for infants and children, through the implementation of appropriate infant feeding practices (Husnaniyah, Yulyanti, & Rudiansyah, 2020). The results of the study on maternal education showed that the majority, 39 (72.2%) respondents, had a high school education. This aligns with research conducted by Siahaan & Tasmi (2022), which found that the majority of respondents had a secondary education (high school/senior high school), with 25 (61%) respondents.

Graduating from high school is considered a higher education because it takes 12 years. Education serves as a guide to life, encouraging action and filling life with knowledge to improve the quality of life. The higher the level of education, the easier it is for someone to absorb information (Budiarsih, Ramli, & Astuti 2019). According to the researchers' analysis, high school graduates have a higher level of education, enabling them to grasp information more quickly and easily than those with only a junior high or elementary school degree. This is especially true with today's readily accessible internet, making it easily accessible to mothers with children aged 6 months to 2 years about the gold standard for baby food, thus influencing mothers' knowledge.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Occupation

Work is a moral obligation undertaken to produce something of value (Notoatmodjo, 2018). A person's primary motivation for work is a need that must be met. Work plays a crucial role in determining human quality because it can reduce the information gap that arises from social interactions. When linked to knowledge, it can be said that individuals who work are involved in social interactions, which indirectly shape their habits and lifestyle. The results of the study on the occupations of mothers showed that the majority, 32 (59.3%) respondents, were unemployed. This aligns with research conducted by Fakes (2023), which found that 20 (67%) respondents were unemployed. Research conducted by Sari, Basuki, & Triastuti (2016) found that the majority of respondents chose not to work and act as housewives. By fulfilling this role, they have sufficient time and attention to focus on their children and family. Research by Nur, Oematan, & Rina (2021) supports this finding, with 80.9% of mothers choosing not to work or to act as housewives. As housewives, they have more time to devote to childcare compared to working mothers, whose time is more limited. According to the researchers' analysis, mothers who do not work and choose to be housewives to devote themselves to their children and family have more time with them than working mothers. This allows unemployed mothers to use their time to understand their children's needs and learn about their children's needs, especially regarding the gold standard of baby food, so that their children do not lack the gold standard of baby food.

Respondent Characteristics Based on Income

Income or salary is a reward provided by a company to employees based on their length of service. Salary typically represents payment for services rendered over a longer period, typically one month (Sari, Citra, and Sanjaya, 2021). Research findings show that families with children aged 6 months to 2 years in Madugowongjati Village are predominantly high-income, with incomes exceeding Rp2,379,702 (55.6%). This finding aligns with research conducted by Pelangi & Ayubi (2019), which found that the highest income for families with the regional minimum wage (UMR) in Aceh Besar Regency was 83 (62.9%) respondents. Research conducted by Pratiwi & Restanty (2018) found that all respondents' incomes were above the regional minimum wage (UMR). A community's socioeconomic condition is a collective effort to overcome or mitigate life's challenges, which can be measured through five parameters: age, gender, education level, occupation, and income level. According to Sebataraja, Oenzeil, & Asterina (2016), family income determines the quantity and quality of food consumed. Families with a higher standard of living tend to provide better nutrition for their children than those with a lower standard of living. According to the researchers' analysis, high family income can encourage mothers to purchase nutritious and varied foods, preventing children from getting bored easily, and meeting the gold standard of baby food.

Mothers' Knowledge of the Gold Standard for Infant Food

Knowledge regarding infant feeding patterns, including early initiation of breastfeeding (IMD), exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding (MPASI), and breastfeeding until at least 2 years of age, is influenced by physiological, psychological, and social factors. These factors determine the types of foods chosen, the amounts consumed, who consumes them, and the timing of whether or not to feed them (Ayuningtyas, Hasanah, & Yuliawati, 2021). Good knowledge increases mothers' awareness of their infant's or child's health, thus influencing their behavior in seeking healthcare (Dahlia, Kartasurya, & Arso, 2022). The results of the study on the gold standard for baby food in Madugowongjati Village revealed that 54 respondents (100%) had a good level of knowledge regarding the gold standard for baby food. This is in line with research conducted by Purwaningsih & Rofiqoch (2024), which found that the majority of respondents had a good level of knowledge, namely 37 respondents (72.5%) of 57 respondents.

In general, the study found that overall knowledge was good. However, after examining each question item within the gold standard for baby food components, namely Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD), Exclusive Breastfeeding (EB), Complementary Breastfeeding (MPASI), and Breastfeeding until at least 2 years of age, the study found that several respondents still did not fully understand the concepts of Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (IMD), Exclusive Breastfeeding (EB), Complementary Breastfeeding (MPASI), and Breastfeeding until at least 2 years of age. This can be seen in item number 1, Early Initiation of Breastfeeding, which states that babies are allowed to seek their mother's nipple to breastfeed immediately after birth. Two (3.7%) respondents still answered incorrectly. Item statement no. 7 exclusive breastfeeding, namely giving breast milk with additional water until the age of 6 months, there are 40 (74.2%) answered correctly which is an unfavorable statement and number 10 there are still 44 (81.5%) mothers do not know that the benefits of breastfeeding is to accelerate the uterus to its previous size. In addition, question item no. 15 about complementary foods given when breast milk alone is no longer sufficient for the baby's nutritional needs, there are 15 (27.8%) answered incorrectly, item number 17 there are still 46 respondents (85.2%) do not understand that after the child is given MPASI, the child must still be given breast milk until the age of at least 2 years. In number 21 there are still 37 (68.5%) mothers still do not understand that giving MPASI before the age of 6 months can disrupt digestion such as diarrhea. And in number 22 there are still 45 (83.3%) mothers do not understand that when the baby is 6 months old, breast milk alone is not enough to meet nutritional needs.

In question number 27, "Mothers should not breastfeed for more than 2 years," 19 (35.2%) mothers still did not know that breastfeeding for more than 2 years was allowed. In question number 28, 48 (88.9%) mothers still did not understand that not breastfeeding until the age of 2 years would impact the baby or child's brain development, which would be less than optimal and even prone to stunting. According to the Health Belief Model study (Madyasari, SuliStyorini, & Rahmawati, 2022), factors such as age, socioeconomic status, knowledge, and individual attitudes play a role in encouraging behavioral changes, both in terms of prevention and response. Mothers with adequate knowledge tend to be more proactive in taking preventative measures by preparing their children's nutritional needs. Mothers need to have adequate knowledge regarding proper nutrition for their children. This knowledge is the result of a learning process that has been carried out previously through sensory experiences. Attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors regarding health are influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors include knowledge, perception, emotion, and motivation, while external factors include the physical and non-physical environment (Ayu, Sofiana, & Halimatusa, 2019). According to the researchers' analysis, mothers' knowledge is considered good primarily due to factors such as age, readiness to start a family, higher education, such as 12 years of high school, which is certainly different from those who only graduated from junior high school, and choosing not to work or become a housewife, which provides more time to understand and learn about the needs of children and families. This is especially true in today's era of easy internet access and other social media platforms. Furthermore, a good family income, or approximately above the minimum wage, allows mothers to vary their menus to prevent children from getting bored, thus meeting the gold standard of food.

CONCLUSION

The characteristics of the respondents were: the majority or average age is 23 years (16.7%), the majority of whom had a high school education 39 respondent (72.2%), the majority of whom were unemployed 32 respondent (59.3%), and the majority of whom had a high income of \geq Rp2,379,702 are 30 respondent (55.6%). The results of the study showed that all respondents had knowledge in the good category (100%).

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