

EFFECT OF LACTATION COUNSELING ON MATERNAL BREASTFEEDING KNOWLEDGE AMONG POSTPARTUM MOTHERS AT RSUD TUANKU IMAM BONJOL LUBUK SIKAPING

Reni Yusman¹, Tika Kencana², Yanti³, Yulia Netri⁴, Lira Dian Nofita⁵, Afrida Yelni⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Program Studi Pendidikan Profesi Bidan, Universitas Senior, Medan, Indonesia
Email correspondence* :: rerey_yusman@yahoo.com

ABSTRAK : PENGARUH KONSELING LAKTASI TERHADAP PENGETAHUAN IBU TENTANG MENYUSUI PADA IBU NIFAS DI RSUD TUANKU IMAM BONJOL LUBUK SIKAPING

Pengetahuan yang memadai tentang menyusui merupakan faktor penting bagi ibu nifas dalam memulai dan mempertahankan praktik menyusui yang tepat. Konseling laktasi merupakan salah satu strategi yang direkomendasikan untuk meningkatkan pengetahuan dan kepercayaan diri ibu selama periode awal masa nifas. Namun demikian, bukti mengenai efektivitas konseling laktasi di rumah sakit daerah masih terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh konseling laktasi terstruktur terhadap pengetahuan ibu nifas tentang menyusui di RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping.

Penelitian ini menggunakan desain *quasi-experimental* dengan rancangan *posttest-only nonequivalent control group* yang dilaksanakan pada bulan April hingga Mei 2026. Sebanyak 30 ibu nifas dibagi ke dalam kelompok intervensi ($n = 15$) dan kelompok kontrol ($n = 15$). Kelompok intervensi memperoleh konseling laktasi terstruktur yang diberikan secara individual oleh bidan terlatih dalam dua sesi, masing-masing berdurasi 30 menit, sedangkan kelompok kontrol memperoleh edukasi rutin masa nifas sesuai standar pelayanan rumah sakit. Pengetahuan ibu tentang menyusui diukur menggunakan kuesioner yang diadaptasi dari Sutrisminah (2020) yang terdiri atas 10 butir pertanyaan. Setiap jawaban benar diberi skor 1 dan jawaban salah diberi skor 0, sehingga skor total berkisar antara 0–10. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan uji *Independent Samples t-test* dengan tingkat kemaknaan $p < 0,05$.

Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa rata-rata skor pengetahuan menyusui pada kelompok intervensi lebih tinggi dibandingkan kelompok kontrol ($6,67 \pm 0,82$ vs. $2,80 \pm 0,78$). Perbedaan rerata skor sebesar 3,87 poin (95% CI: 3,27–4,47) menunjukkan adanya peningkatan pengetahuan yang bermakna secara statistik ($p < 0,001$).

Konseling laktasi terstruktur secara signifikan meningkatkan pengetahuan ibu nifas tentang menyusui dibandingkan dengan edukasi rutin masa nifas. Integrasi konseling laktasi terstruktur ke dalam pelayanan rutin masa nifas berpotensi meningkatkan kesiapan ibu dalam menerapkan praktik menyusui yang tepat. Penelitian selanjutnya disarankan melibatkan jumlah sampel yang lebih besar, menggunakan instrumen yang telah tervalidasi, serta melakukan tindak lanjut dalam jangka waktu yang lebih panjang untuk mengevaluasi apakah peningkatan pengetahuan ibu dapat berdampak pada praktik menyusui yang lebih baik dan keberhasilan pemberian ASI eksklusif.

Kata Kunci : Ibu Nifas, Konseling Laktasi, Pengetahuan menyusui

ABSTRACT

Adequate breastfeeding knowledge is essential for postpartum mothers to initiate and maintain appropriate breastfeeding practices. Lactation counseling is a recommended strategy to improve maternal understanding and confidence during the early postpartum period; however, evidence regarding its effectiveness in regional hospitals remains limited. This study aimed to determine the effect of structured lactation counseling on maternal breastfeeding knowledge among postpartum mothers at RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping.

A quasi-experimental study with a posttest-only nonequivalent control group design was conducted from April to May 2026 involving 30 postpartum mothers. Participants were allocated into an intervention group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$). The intervention group received structured lactation counseling delivered individually by trained midwives in two 30-minute sessions, whereas the control group received routine postpartum education. Maternal breastfeeding knowledge was assessed using a 10-item questionnaire adapted from Sutrisminah (2020). Each correct response was scored as one point, yielding a total score ranging from 0 to 10. Data were analyzed using an independent samples *t-test* with a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

The intervention group achieved a significantly higher mean breastfeeding knowledge score than the control group (6.67 ± 0.82 vs. 2.80 ± 0.78). The mean difference was 3.87 points (95% CI: 3.27–4.47), indicating a statistically significant improvement in breastfeeding knowledge ($p < 0.001$).

Structured lactation counseling significantly improved maternal breastfeeding knowledge compared with routine postpartum education. Integrating structured lactation counseling into routine postpartum services may enhance maternal preparedness for appropriate breastfeeding practices. Further studies involving larger sample sizes, validated measurement instruments, and longer follow-up periods are recommended to determine whether improvements in breastfeeding knowledge translate into improved breastfeeding practices and exclusive breastfeeding outcomes.

Keywords: Breastfeeding Knowledge, Lactation Counseling, Postpartum Mothers

INTRODUCTION

Breastfeeding is universally recognized as the optimal source of nutrition for infants and provides substantial health benefits for both infants and mothers. Early initiation and appropriate breastfeeding practices contribute to optimal infant growth, reduce the risk of infectious diseases, and promote maternal health by lowering the risk of postpartum hemorrhage and certain chronic diseases (1). Despite these well-established benefits, many mothers encounter difficulties in initiating and maintaining appropriate breastfeeding practices during the postpartum period, often due to inadequate knowledge, limited practical skills, and insufficient family or health-care support (2).

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, followed by continued breastfeeding alongside complementary feeding up to two years of age or beyond (2). However, achieving this recommendation requires that mothers possess adequate knowledge and confidence regarding breastfeeding techniques, breast care, and management of common breastfeeding problems (3). Inadequate breastfeeding knowledge during the early postpartum period has been consistently identified as one of the major barriers to successful breastfeeding practices (4).

In Indonesia, breastfeeding promotion remains a national public health priority. Although the coverage of exclusive breastfeeding has improved in recent years, considerable disparities persist across provinces and health facilities. Previous studies have shown that insufficient maternal knowledge, misconceptions regarding breastfeeding, lack of family support, and inadequate counseling from health professionals contribute to suboptimal breastfeeding practices (5). Consequently, strengthening breastfeeding education during the postpartum period has become

an important strategy to improve maternal preparedness before mothers return home (6).

Lactation counseling is an evidence-based educational intervention designed to enhance maternal knowledge, self-confidence, and breastfeeding skills through individualized education, demonstration, and continuous support (4). Counseling delivered by trained midwives has been reported to improve mothers' understanding of breastfeeding techniques, breast care, correct infant attachment, recognition of adequate milk intake, and management of common breastfeeding problems. As the health professionals who most frequently interact with postpartum mothers, midwives play a pivotal role in providing practical breastfeeding education during hospitalization (7).

Several previous studies have demonstrated the positive effects of lactation counseling on maternal breastfeeding knowledge and breastfeeding practices. Nevertheless, evidence from regional hospitals, particularly in West Sumatra, remains limited (7). Differences in maternal educational background, parity, cultural beliefs, family support, and access to breastfeeding information may influence the effectiveness of counseling interventions. Therefore, findings from one setting cannot be directly generalized to another without local evidence (6).

At RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping, postpartum education is routinely provided as part of maternal care. However, the effectiveness of structured lactation counseling in improving maternal breastfeeding knowledge has not been systematically evaluated. Understanding the impact of structured counseling in this setting is essential for developing evidence-based postpartum education programs and strengthening the role of midwives in breastfeeding promotion (8).

Therefore, this study aimed to determine the effect of structured lactation counseling on maternal breastfeeding knowledge among postpartum mothers at RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk

Sikaping. The findings are expected to provide scientific evidence to support the integration of structured lactation counseling into routine postpartum care and contribute to improving the quality of maternal and newborn health services.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quasi-experimental design with a posttest-only nonequivalent control group design to evaluate the effect of structured lactation counseling on maternal breastfeeding knowledge. The study was conducted from April to May 2026 at RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping, West Sumatra, Indonesia.

The study population consisted of all postpartum mothers admitted to the maternity ward during the study period. A total sampling technique was used, resulting in 30 eligible participants who were allocated into an intervention group ($n = 15$) and a control group ($n = 15$) based on the postpartum ward where they received care. The intervention group received structured lactation counseling delivered individually by trained midwives in two 30-minute sessions using lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and educational leaflets. The counseling covered breastfeeding techniques, breast care, breastfeeding frequency, expressing breast milk, management of common breastfeeding problems, and family support. The control group received routine postpartum education according to the hospital's standard care.

Maternal breastfeeding knowledge was assessed using a 10-item true-or-false questionnaire adapted from Sutrisminah (2020). The questionnaire assessed knowledge related to breastfeeding techniques, breast care, breastfeeding frequency, expressed breast milk, infant care after breastfeeding, and family support. Each correct answer was scored as one point and each incorrect answer as zero, yielding a total score ranging from 0 to 10, with higher scores indicating better breastfeeding knowledge.

Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics and breastfeeding knowledge scores. Data normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Differences in mean knowledge scores between the intervention and control groups were analyzed using the Independent Samples t -test with a significance level of $p < 0.05$.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1
Frequency Distribution of Respondents in the Control Group

Category	Frequency	%
Age		
<20 years	4	26.7
20–35 years	10	66.7
>35 years	1	6.7
Occupation		
Bekerja	3	20
Tidak Bekerja	12	80

Based on the table above, among the 15 respondents in the control group, the majority of postpartum mothers at RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping were aged 20–35 years, and almost all breastfeeding postpartum mothers were unemployed, totaling 12 respondents (80%).

Table 2
Frequency Distribution of Respondents in the Intervention Group

Category	Frequency	%
Age		
<20 years	1	6.7
20–35 years	8	53.3
>35 years	6	40
Occupation		
Employed	5	33.3
Unemployed	10	66.7

Based on the table above, among the 15 respondents in the intervention group, the majority of postpartum mothers at RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping were aged 20–35 years, and most breastfeeding postpartum mothers were unemployed, totaling 10 respondents (66.7%).

Univariate Analysis

Effect of Lactation Counseling on Breastfeeding Knowledge

Based on the table above, among the 15 respondents, the mean knowledge score of postpartum mothers who received lactation counseling was 6.67, with a standard deviation of 0.816. The lowest knowledge score was 5, while the highest score was 8.

Table 3

Variabel	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Intervention	15	6.67	0.816	5	8

Table 4

Variabel	N	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Control	15	2.80	0.775	2	4

Based on the table above, among the 15 respondents, the mean knowledge score of postpartum mothers who did not receive lactation counseling was 2.80, with a standard deviation of 0.775. The lowest knowledge score was 2, while the highest score was 4.

Bivariate Analysis

The Independent Samples *t*-test demonstrated a statistically significant difference in breastfeeding knowledge scores between

postpartum mothers who received structured lactation counseling and those who received routine postpartum education (mean difference = 3.87; 95% CI: 3.27–4.47; $p < 0.001$). Mothers in the intervention group achieved a higher mean knowledge score (6.67 ± 0.82) than those in the control group (2.80 ± 0.78), indicating that structured lactation counseling effectively improved maternal breastfeeding knowledge during the postpartum period.

Table 5
Independent Samples *t*-test of Breastfeeding Knowledge Scores

Variabel	Intervention Mean $\pm$ SD	Control Mean $\pm$ SD	Mean Difference	95% CI	df	p-value
Breastfeeding knowledge	6.67 $\pm$ 0.82	2.80 $\pm$ 0.78	3.87	3.27–4.47	28	<0.001

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrated that structured lactation counseling significantly improved breastfeeding knowledge among postpartum mothers. Mothers who received lactation counseling achieved a significantly higher mean knowledge score than those who received routine postpartum education (6.67 ± 0.82 vs. 2.80 ± 0.78 ; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that structured counseling delivered by trained midwives effectively enhances mothers' understanding of breastfeeding during the early postpartum period. This finding is consistent with previous studies reporting that individualized breastfeeding education significantly (9) improves maternal knowledge and breastfeeding self-efficacy (2).

Adequate breastfeeding knowledge is an essential prerequisite for successful breastfeeding practices. Mothers who understand correct breastfeeding techniques, breast care, breastfeeding frequency, and the management of common breastfeeding problems are more likely to breastfeed confidently and overcome difficulties encountered during the postpartum period. In this study, counseling was delivered through lectures, demonstrations, interactive discussions, and

educational leaflets. This combination of educational approaches may have facilitated participants' comprehension and retention of breastfeeding information. Educational interventions that combine verbal explanation with practical demonstration have been shown to improve maternal learning outcomes more effectively than conventional health education alone (10).

The findings are consistent with previous studies reporting that lactation counseling improves maternal breastfeeding knowledge and confidence. The World Health Organization recommends breastfeeding counseling as an integral component of maternal and newborn care because individualized counseling enables mothers to identify breastfeeding problems, receive practical guidance, and develop confidence in breastfeeding. Likewise, previous systematic reviews have shown that breastfeeding counseling provided by trained health professionals significantly improves breastfeeding-related knowledge and supports appropriate breastfeeding practices.

The improvement observed in this study may also be explained by the role of midwives as frontline maternal healthcare providers. During the postpartum period, mothers frequently experience

uncertainty regarding breastfeeding techniques, infant positioning, breast care, and perceived insufficient milk supply. Individual counseling allows mothers to discuss these concerns directly with trained midwives and receive immediate feedback and practical demonstrations. Such interactions are likely to strengthen maternal knowledge and improve readiness to practice appropriate breastfeeding techniques (11).

Despite the positive findings, several limitations should be considered. First, this study employed a nonequivalent control group design without random allocation, which may introduce selection bias. Second, the sample size was relatively small and recruited from a single hospital, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings. Third, the questionnaire used in this study was adapted from a previous study and was not re-evaluated for validity and reliability in the present sample. Finally, although a pretest was initially administered, only posttest data were available for analysis. Consequently, the study evaluated differences in post-intervention breastfeeding knowledge rather than changes in knowledge over time. Future studies should employ randomized controlled designs, larger sample sizes, validated instruments, and longer follow-up periods to evaluate the effect of lactation counseling on breastfeeding practices and exclusive breastfeeding outcomes.

The findings of this study have important implications for clinical practice. Integrating structured lactation counseling into routine postpartum care may strengthen breastfeeding education and improve maternal preparedness before hospital discharge. Hospitals should support the implementation of standardized lactation counseling delivered by trained midwives and ensure the availability of educational materials to reinforce breastfeeding education. Continuous evaluation is also recommended to determine whether improvements in maternal knowledge translate into better breastfeeding practices and sustained exclusive breastfeeding.

CONCLUSION

Structured lactation counseling significantly improved breastfeeding knowledge among postpartum mothers at RSUD Tuanku Imam Bonjol Lubuk Sikaping. Mothers who received structured counseling demonstrated significantly higher breastfeeding knowledge scores than those who received routine postpartum education. These findings suggest that individualized lactation counseling delivered by trained midwives is an

effective educational strategy for enhancing maternal understanding of breastfeeding during the early postpartum period.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Hospitals should consider integrating structured lactation counseling into routine postpartum care to strengthen maternal breastfeeding education before discharge. Training programs should be provided to midwives to ensure the delivery of standardized, evidence-based lactation counseling. Future studies are recommended to include larger sample sizes, validated measurement instruments, randomized study designs, and longer follow-up periods to evaluate whether improvements in breastfeeding knowledge lead to better breastfeeding practices and exclusive breastfeeding outcomes.

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