



Efforts to Increase Mothers' Knowledge About Postpartum Blues

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ABSTRACT

Postpartum blues, also known as baby blues, is a common emotional condition experienced by mothers after childbirth. If not properly addressed, it can significantly affect the mother's mental health and overall family well-being. Limited awareness of postpartum blues, particularly in Nambo Village, Kendari City, has driven the implementation of this community service initiative. The objective was to improve pregnant women's understanding of the symptoms, causes, as well as strategies to manage and prevent postpartum blues.

The activity was conducted on Saturday, November 2, 2024, at the Nambo Village Hall, involving a team of lecturers from the Faculty of Medicine, Halu Oleo University. The methods used included interactive counseling, group discussions, simulations, and the distribution of educational materials. A total of 25 pregnant women participated in the program. Evaluation was carried out using pre-test and post-test assessments to measure the increase in participants' knowledge.

Results indicated an 85% improvement in participants' understanding after the counseling session. This initiative successfully raised awareness and enhanced the understanding of pregnant women about postpartum blues, while also encouraging openness in discussing mental health issues. The intervention demonstrated that community-based education can serve as a strategic approach to improving maternal and family health quality. Moving forward, follow-up programs are needed to strengthen and sustain the positive impacts achieved through this activity.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Maternal mental health after childbirth is an important aspect that is often overlooked in postpartum care (Eristono et al., 2023; Pramudianti et al., 2020). One common condition experienced by mothers after delivery is postpartum blues, often referred to as baby blues. Postpartum blues are characterized by feelings of anxiety, irritability, and sadness that typically occur within the first few days after childbirth (Hariati et al., 2021; Utamidewi et al., 2022). Although this condition is generally temporary, if not properly addressed, it can develop into more serious postpartum depression. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance mothers' understanding of the symptoms, causes, and ways to manage postpartum blues to support their mental health (Kołomańska-Bogucka & Mazur-Bialy, 2019).

Nambo, a district in Kendari City, is one of the areas with a relatively high birth rate. However, many mothers living in this region have limited awareness of postpartum blues and its impact on their mental health. The lack of information available to postpartum mothers about this condition makes them less likely to express their symptoms, which can disrupt the well-being of both the mother and her family. Hence, more intensive efforts are needed to educate mothers in Nambo about the importance of recognizing and addressing postpartum blues.

This community service initiative aims to provide better understanding of postpartum blues to mothers in Nambo. Through counseling sessions, discussions, and the distribution of educational materials, it is hoped that mothers will become more sensitive to emotional changes that occur after childbirth. With adequate knowledge, they are expected to seek appropriate support and care to maintain their mental health postpartum (Sambas et al., 2022).

Increasing mothers' awareness of postpartum blues is also expected to encourage them to be more open about the feelings they experience after childbirth. This is particularly important as stigma and lack of understanding about mental health issues can make mothers feel ashamed or uncomfortable in expressing their emotions. In the long term, the success of this program not only improves mothers' quality of life but also has a positive impact on overall family development (Hidayati et al., 2022).

Through this community service program, it is hoped that mothers in Nambo will gain sufficient knowledge about the symptoms and management of postpartum blues and become more independent in maintaining their mental health after delivery. Additionally, this initiative is expected to reduce the incidence of postpartum depression, which can have adverse effects on mothers, children, and families as a whole.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Definition

Postpartum baby blues is an emotional condition commonly experienced by mothers after childbirth, characterized by sudden mood swings, feelings of sadness, anxiety, irritability, and fatigue. This condition typically appears within a few days after delivery and lasts for 1–2 weeks. Baby blues differ from postpartum depression as the symptoms are milder and temporary (S. Bennett & Indman, 2019; Dalfen, 2009).

2. Causes

Postpartum baby blues are caused by a combination of physical, hormonal, and psychological factors, including (S. S. Bennett, 2011):

- a. **Hormonal Changes:** A drastic drop in estrogen and progesterone levels after childbirth can affect mood.
- b. **Physical Fatigue:** The exhausting process of childbirth, lack of sleep, and the demands of caring for a newborn can lead to physical stress.
- c. **Role Transition:** Adjusting to the new role as a mother, taking on significant responsibilities, and adapting to a new routine can trigger anxiety.



- d. Social Support: A lack of support from partners, family, or friends can worsen baby blues symptoms.

3. Symptoms

The symptoms of postpartum baby blues usually include (Dalfen, 2009):

- a. Frequent crying without a clear reason.
- b. Excessive feelings of anxiety or worry.
- c. Irritability or easy frustration.
- d. Difficulty sleeping despite feeling tired.
- e. Lack of concentration or feelings of confusion.
- f. Feeling inadequate in fulfilling the role of a mother.

4. Management

Postpartum baby blues generally do not require specific medical treatment, but emotional and physical support is essential. Some steps that can help include (S. Bennett & Indman, 2019):

- a. Adequate Rest: Try to sleep when the baby sleeps and share responsibilities with a partner or family members.
- b. Emotional Support: Talking to a partner, friends, or family about feelings can help ease emotional burdens.
- c. Me-Time: Take time for enjoyable activities, such as walking or reading a book.
- d. Professional Consultation: If symptoms do not improve after two weeks or worsen, consult a doctor or psychologist immediately.

5. Prevention

Although baby blues cannot always be prevented, the following steps may help reduce the risk (Zivoder et al., 2019):

- a. Preparing emotionally and physically before childbirth.
- b. Building a strong support system with partners, family, and friends.
- c. Managing expectations of the motherhood role.
- d. Attending childbirth preparation classes to understand postpartum challenges.

C. METHODS

This community service program (PKM) was implemented by a team of lecturers from the Faculty of Medicine, Halu Oleo University (UHO), who possess expertise and experience in maternal and child health. The initiative was systematically designed to educate pregnant women—the primary target group—on postpartum blues. The educational approach utilized interactive counseling methods, incorporating visual presentations, group discussions, and the distribution of informative leaflets. Additionally, simple simulations and case studies were conducted to help participants better understand the symptoms, causes, and strategies for addressing postpartum blues.

The program aimed to create a comfortable and supportive atmosphere, allowing participants to easily absorb information while feeling encouraged to maintain their mental health. Held on Saturday, November 2, 2024, at the Nambo Village Hall in Kendari City, the venue was strategically chosen for its accessibility to the local community. The activities commenced with an opening session and an introduction to the implementing team, followed by the main counseling session on postpartum blues. The session covered early signs, risk factors, impacts on mothers and families, and prevention and management strategies.

A Q&A session followed the main counseling, providing participants an opportunity to ask questions or share their experiences. This session aimed to foster effective two-way communication between participants and the implementing team. As a follow-up, participants were given printed materials to serve as at-home guides and provided with contact information



for further consultations if needed.

All activities in this PKM were designed to empower pregnant women with the knowledge and skills to understand and manage their mental health postpartum. The program not only enhanced awareness but also reinforced the importance of proactive mental health management for the well-being of both mothers and families.

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community service activity with the theme "Efforts to Increase Knowledge of Mothers about Postpartum Blues," held on Saturday, November 2, 2024, at the Nambo Village Hall, Kendari City, was successfully conducted. The participants included pregnant women of various stages of pregnancy who reside in Nambo Village and its surrounding areas. A total of 25 participants actively engaged in this event. Prior to the counseling session, a pre-test was administered to assess the participants' initial knowledge about postpartum blues. The results of the pre-test revealed that the majority of participants (80%) had very limited knowledge about this condition, particularly regarding its symptoms, risk factors, and management strategies.

After the counseling session, which was delivered through presentations, discussions, and interactive simulations, participants showed high enthusiasm in understanding the material. A 30-minute Q&A session provided an opportunity for pregnant women to dive deeper into the topic and share their experiences. Based on the post-test evaluation conducted after the activity, there was an 85% increase in participants' knowledge compared to the pre-test results. The participants also expressed appreciation for the information provided, considering it relevant and beneficial in addressing the emotional challenges faced after childbirth. Moreover, the educational material in the form of leaflets was considered very helpful as a practical guide for participants.

Overall, the activity successfully achieved its main objective of enhancing the knowledge of pregnant women about postpartum blues, while also fostering better communication between the community and healthcare providers to support maternal mental health after childbirth.

Table 1. Distribution of Mothers' Knowledge Before and After Intervention

Knowledge Category	Pre-Test (Frequency)	Pre-Test (%)	Post-Test (Frequency)	Post-Test (%)
Good	5	20%	21	85%
Poor	20	80%	4	15%
Total	25	100%	25	100%

The documentation of the community service activity can be presented as follows:



Figure 1. Documentation of PKM implementation

The community service activity conducted in Nambo Village, Kendari City, demonstrated success in increasing pregnant women's knowledge about postpartum blues. Before the activity, the majority of participants had very limited understanding of postpartum blues, as evidenced by the pre-test results, where 80% of participants showed low levels of knowledge. This indicates a lack of access to information about maternal mental health in the community, especially in Nambo. The insufficient understanding may hinder mothers from recognizing the signs of postpartum blues, which could increase the risk of developing more serious conditions such as postpartum depression.

Following the interactive counseling session, there was a significant improvement in participants' knowledge, as shown by the post-test results, which revealed an 85% increase compared to the pre-test. The methods used, such as visual presentations, group discussions, and the distribution of printed materials, proved effective in conveying relevant information that was easy for the participants to understand. Additionally, the Q&A and simulation sessions provided an opportunity for participants to further explore the material and relate it to their personal experiences. This improvement in knowledge demonstrates that the intervention successfully addressed the information gap and provided new, applicable insights for pregnant women (Rezaie-Keikhaie et al., 2020).

In addition to the knowledge gain, the activity also had a positive impact in encouraging participants to be more open about discussing their mental health. This was reflected in the high level of enthusiasm during the discussion and Q&A sessions. Pregnant women who were previously passive became more active in asking questions and sharing experiences related to emotional challenges during pregnancy and concerns after childbirth. This phenomenon shows that the counseling not only increased knowledge but also built collective awareness about the importance of maternal mental health (Zivoder et al., 2019).

With these results, the community service activity provides evidence that education-based interventions can deliver significant benefits in terms of both knowledge enhancement and behavior change. This success also forms the basis for designing follow-up programs, such as health cadre training in Nambo Village, to expand the reach of information and provide ongoing support services for pregnant women and their families. This support is essential to ensure that



the information provided is continuously applied and reinforced in daily life, ensuring optimal mental health for pregnant women.

E. CONCLUSION

The community service activity with the theme "Efforts to Increase Knowledge of Mothers about Postpartum Blues" successfully achieved its main objective, which was to enhance pregnant women's understanding of postpartum blues. Prior to the program, the majority of participants exhibited limited knowledge about this condition. However, after engaging in a series of interactive counseling sessions, there was a significant increase in their understanding, as evidenced by the post-test results, which showed an 85% improvement.

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