

APPLICATION OF COUNSELING ON SKILLS AND SELF-EFFICACY IN POSTPARTUM MOTHERS IN PROPOER BREASTFEEDING PRACTICES IN PMB LILI LUSIANA LUSARI

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ABSTRACT

Breastfeeding is a natural process that provides significant benefits for infant growth and development, both nutritionally, immunologically, and psychologically. However, inappropriate breastfeeding practices still often occur due to a lack of knowledge, skills, and low maternal self-efficacy in breastfeeding. One intervention that can be implemented to improve breastfeeding success is through breastfeeding counseling. This study aims to determine the effect of counseling on postpartum mothers' skills and self-efficacy in correct breastfeeding. This study used a quasi-experimental design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach. The study sample was all postpartum mothers who met the inclusion criteria at PMB Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, selected using a total sampling technique. The intervention was provided in the form of direct breastfeeding counseling. Data were collected using the Breastfeeding Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (BSES-SF) questionnaire and breastfeeding skills observation sheets. The analysis results showed a significant difference between pre- and post-intervention scores, indicating an increase in maternal breastfeeding skills and self-efficacy. This study concludes that breastfeeding counseling is effective in improving postpartum mothers' skills in proper breastfeeding practices, and is therefore recommended as part of routine services to support successful breastfeeding.

Keywords: Counseling, Breastfeeding, Skills, Self-Efficacy, Postpartum

Introduction

Infants who have received exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia, namely infants up to the age of 6 months, amounted to 29.5%, this is not in accordance with the target of the Ministry of Health Strategic Plan for 2015-2019, namely the percentage of 50%. Nationally, the coverage of infants gets exclusive breastfeeding at 61.33%. One of the law exclusife breastfeeding causes is less amount of breast milk production in the first day after giving a birth which is caused by less oxytocin and prolactin hormones stimulation in which they have a role to smoothen breast milk production that causes breast milk to

not immediately come out after giving a birth. (Manurung, 2019).

Breastfeeding is a valuable practice for a child's development, both nutritionally and immunologically. It also supports the mother-child bond. Breast milk provides wide-ranging health benefits for the baby, including reducing morbidity and mortality rates. It also has a positive impact on both maternal and child health. (Hilana Dayana Dodou, Raylla Araujo bezerra, Anne Fayma Lopes Chaves, 2021). Improper breastfeeding techniques can lead to sore nipples and other complications. Many mothers are unaware of proper breastfeeding techniques, which

often leads to mistakes or even refusal to breastfeed. Data from the Directorate General of Public Health, Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia in 2021 showed that the percentage of babies in Indonesia receiving exclusive breastfeeding was 66.1% (Ministry Of Health RI, 2021)

Self-assurance in the mother's capacity to breastfeed successfully is one of the elements that can promote effective breastfeeding. Self-efficacy, which can boost motivation, is a person's confidence in something they haven't yet accomplished. A mother's strength that affects breastfeeding responses, like effort and thoughts, which in turn affect the start and intensity of nursing activity is known as breastfeeding self-efficacy. (Widyastuti *et al.*, 2024)

In addition to emphasizing physical recuperation, the postpartum phase also marks the beginning of breastfeeding, which calls for adequate psychological, emotional, and physical preparedness. Not many mothers, nevertheless, are able to handle this time as best they can. Low nursing self-efficacy is a prevalent problem that directly affects the effectiveness of exclusive breastfeeding. Self-efficacy is the conviction that one can take action to accomplish desired outcomes. (Pada *et al.*, 2025)

The importance of breastfeeding benefits is widely known by many people, especially by mothers who have given birth.

However, this awareness does not necessarily lead all mothers to willingly breastfeed their babies directly due to various reasons. The lactation process is influenced by two hormones: prolactin and oxytocin. Prolactin is the hormone that affects breast milk production, while oxytocin is the hormone that influences the release of breast milk (Putri, 2021)

Emotional stability is necessary for breastfeeding since psychological factors have a big impact on milk production. A mother's strength that affects her nursing reactions, such as effort and thoughts, which in turn affect the start and intensity of breastfeeding, is known as breastfeeding self-efficacy. (Fauziyatun Nisa, 2022)

The lack of exclusive breastfeeding achievement is caused by issues such as breast milk not coming out or flowing smoothly, sore nipples, and other factors. In addition to technical skills, one of the reasons for inadequate exclusive breastfeeding is the mother's lack of self-confidence. Some mothers feel hesitant to breastfeed their babies, lack confidence in their breastfeeding technique, and do not have the necessary skills and knowledge to breastfeed properly. A key factor that significantly affects maternal satisfaction in breastfeeding is the mother's belief in her ability to breastfeed her baby, commonly referred to as breastfeeding self-efficacy (Putri, 2021).

Considering the importance of exclusive breastfeeding, it is necessary to provide counseling on proper breastfeeding techniques to postpartum mothers, in order to increase their knowledge. The basic concept of breastfeeding counseling during the postpartum period is a meaningful learning process, in which growth, development, or positive changes toward greater maturity and improved practices occur in postpartum mothers regarding proper breastfeeding techniques (Samsinar, 2021).

Several government efforts to improve breastfeeding coverage include the establishment of lactation clinics, breastfeeding counseling, formalizing the right to breastfeed (including in the workplace), and banning the promotion of breast milk substitutes. Breastfeeding

counseling is an effort carried out by counselors to help clients solve problems they are experiencing without coercion. It provides fundamental knowledge about breastfeeding that is highly beneficial for mothers (Ministry Of Health RI, 2021)

Research Method

The activity was carried out at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana in Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in May 2024. This study is a descriptive quantitative research using a cross-sectional approach, which aims to identify the description or relationship between variables at the same time. The research activity began with the preparation stage, including the development of the proposal, preparation of research instruments, obtaining research permits from relevant institutions such as the university, the public health center (puskesmas), and PMB Lili Lusiana Lusari, as well as conducting validity and reliability tests for the instruments if needed. Data collection was conducted at PMB Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024. A total sampling technique was used, in which all postpartum mothers who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria were included as research subjects. Data were collected through structured interviews and/or questionnaire completion, followed by the processes of coding, editing, and data entry into a statistical software program. Data analysis was carried out univariately to describe the frequency distribution of each variable, and bivariately to examine the relationship between two variables using appropriate statistical tests. The final stage included reporting the research findings in a written report, conducting a research seminar, and compiling the final research report.

Result

Table 1. Respondents' Characteristics Before Counseling on Skills and Self-Efficacy of Postpartum Mothers Regarding Proper Breastfeeding Techniques.

Skill	Frequency(N)	Presentase
5	1	6.7
6	1	6.7
7	7	13.3
8	5	33.3
9	3	20.0
10	1	6.7
11	2	13.3
Total	15	100.0

Based on Table 1, among the 15 postpartum mothers, the majority of respondents before receiving counseling on proper breastfeeding skills were classified as follows: a score of 5 (Not skilled) was obtained by 1 respondent (6.7%), a score of 6 (Not skilled) by 1 respondent (6.7%), a score of 7 (Less skilled) by 7 respondents (46.7%), a score of 8 (Skilled) by 5 respondents (33.3%), a score of 9 (Less skilled) by 3 respondents (20.0%), a score of 10 (Less skilled) by 1 respondent (6.7%), and a score of 11 (Less skilled) by 2 respondents (13.3%).

Table 2. Respondents' Characteristics After Counseling on Skills and Self-Efficacy of Postpartum Mothers Regarding Proper Breastfeeding Techniques.

Skill	Frequency(N)	Presentase
14	1	6.7
15	3	20.0
16	3	20.0
17	3	20.0
18	5	33.3
Total	15	100.0

Based on Table 2, among the 15 postpartum mothers, the majority of respondents after receiving counseling on proper breastfeeding skills showed the following results: a score of 14 (Skilled) was obtained by 1 respondent (6.7%), a score of 15 (Skilled) by 3 respondents (20.0%), a score of 16 (Skilled) by 3 respondents (20.0%), a score of 17 (Skilled) by 3 respondents (20.0%), and a score of 18 (Skilled) by 5 respondents (33.3%) at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Table 3. Respondents' Characteristics After Counseling on the Skills and Self-Efficacy of Postpartum Mothers Regarding Proper Breastfeeding Techniques.

Self-Efficacy	Frequency(N)	Presentase
20	1	6.7
29	2	13.3
30	2	13.3
31	3	20.0
32	7	46.7
Total	15	100.0

Based on Table 3, among the 15 postpartum mothers, the majority of respondents before receiving self-efficacy counseling on proper breastfeeding techniques had the following scores: a score of 20 was obtained by 1 respondent (6.7%), a score of 29 by 2 respondents (13.3%), a score of 30 by 2 respondents (13.3%), a score of 31 by 3 respondents (20.0%), and a score of 32 by 7 respondents (46.7%) at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Table 4. Respondents' Characteristics After Counseling on the Skills and Self-

Efficacy of Postpartum Mothers Regarding Proper Breastfeeding Techniques.

Self-Efficacy	Frequency(N)	Presentase
58	2	13.3
59	7	60.0
60	6	40.0
Total	15	100.0

Based on Table 4, among the 15 postpartum mothers, the majority of respondents after receiving self-efficacy counseling on proper breastfeeding techniques had a score of 58, which was obtained by 2 respondents (40.0%) at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Table 5. Paired Samples Statistics Based on Before and After Counseling on the Skills and Self-Efficacy of Postpartum Mothers Regarding Proper Breastfeeding Techniques at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Paired Samples Statistics

	N	Mea n	Sid. Deviasi on	Std. Error mea n	P.Val ue
Sebelum	15	8.27	1.668	0.43	
Sesudah	15	16.5	1.356	0.35	0.000

Based on the paired samples statistics table, the results showed that the mean score before counseling on proper breastfeeding techniques among postpartum mothers was 8.27 (indicating less skilled in performing proper breastfeeding techniques), while the mean score after counseling was 16.53

(indicating skilled in performing proper breastfeeding techniques). In the test statistics, the p-value was 0.000 ($0.000 < 0.005$), thus H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that there is a significant effect of counseling on the skills and self-efficacy of postpartum mothers regarding proper breastfeeding techniques at the Independent

Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Table 6. Paired Samples Statistics Based on Before and After Counseling on the Skills and Self-Efficacy of Postpartum Mothers Regarding Proper Breastfeeding Techniques at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Paired Samples Statistics				
N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	P-Value
Sebelum	30.33	3.063	0.791	0.000
Sesudah	59.27	0.703	0.181	

Based on the table above, the results showed that the mean score before receiving self-efficacy intervention on proper breastfeeding techniques among postpartum mothers was 80.33, while the mean score after the intervention was 59.267. In the test statistics, the p-value was 0.000 ($0.000 < 0.005$), thus H_0 is rejected. It can be concluded that there is a significant effect of self-efficacy on postpartum mothers regarding proper breastfeeding techniques at the

Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

Discussion

The results of the study indicated a significant improvement in the skills and self-efficacy of postpartum mothers after receiving counseling on proper breastfeeding techniques at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024. This was demonstrated through the analysis of paired samples statistics, where the average breastfeeding skill score before counseling was **8.27** (categorized as *less skilled*), which increased to **16.53** (categorized as *skilled*) after counseling. The p-value obtained was **0.000** ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant effect. Most respondents initially exhibited low skill levels; however, following the counseling session, all respondents demonstrated noticeable improvement in their breastfeeding skills.

These findings are consistent with a study conducted by Maria Mira Tika (2023), which also found that counseling had an effect on improving the skills and self-efficacy of postpartum mothers in breastfeeding, with the average skill score increasing from **5.538** to **8.047**. Counseling has been shown to have a positive impact, as it serves as an educational medium that helps clients understand the problems they face and encourages better behavioral changes (Susilawati, 2022)

In the process, the counselor facilitates the client to think critically, understand the importance of their role, and foster the development of sustainable practical abilities, including in breastfeeding. Proper breastfeeding skills are essential, as they

directly affect the success of breastfeeding and the overall health of the baby, skills refer to an individual's capacity to perform complex activities smoothly and adaptively. In the context of breastfeeding, these skills include latching techniques, breastfeeding positions, and responsiveness to the baby's hunger cues.

In addition to skills, self-efficacy also increased significantly after counseling. Based on the analysis results, the mean self-efficacy score of postpartum mothers before counseling was **80.33**, and it decreased to **59.267** after the intervention. Although the score appears to have declined, this may be due to inconsistencies in the scoring system or differences in the measurement scale, which requires further clarification regarding the instrument used. Nevertheless, the p-value of **0.000 (p < 0.05)** still indicates a statistically significant difference.

This study is supported by findings from Arief Widayanti, which showed an increase in breastfeeding self-efficacy from a pre-test score of **43.59** to **58.35** after receiving health education on exclusive breastfeeding. Additionally, research by Andesma Saputra and Dedi Fatrida found that education using the **BEST** (Breastfeeding Education and Support Tools) approach significantly influenced breastfeeding latch-on techniques. These studies reinforce the notion that educational interventions—whether through direct counseling or visual media—are effective in enhancing mothers' skills and confidence in breastfeeding. Self-efficacy is an essential component in the process of behavior change. According self-efficacy is an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform a specific task or action. Mothers with high self-efficacy are more confident, persistent, and motivated

in breastfeeding their babies even when facing challenges such as pain from (Ameyaw, Amoah and Ezezika, 2024) Thus, the results of this study confirm that counseling plays a crucial role in improving the skills and self-efficacy of postpartum mothers in proper breastfeeding practices. It not only impacts the technical aspects of breastfeeding but also helps shape the mother's mental readiness to undergo the breastfeeding process optimally. Structured and continuous counseling should become an integral part of postpartum maternal health services in order to support the improvement of both maternal and infant quality of life.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of counseling has a significant effect on improving the skills and self-efficacy of postpartum mothers in practicing proper breastfeeding techniques. After receiving counseling, the average skill score increased from **8.27** to **16.53**, and the improvement in self-efficacy was supported by a **p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05)**. Therefore, counseling is effective in enhancing the ability of postpartum mothers to breastfeed correctly at the Independent Midwife Practice (PMB) of Lili Lusiana Lusari, Serdang Bedagai Regency, North Sumatra Province, in 2024.

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