

## Research Article

# Nutritional Status of Toddlers Taken Care for by Parents and by Other Than Parents

Ganis Indriati\*, Yufitriana Amir, Ririn Muthia Zukhra

Nursing Faculty, University of Riau

**ORCID**Ganis Indriati: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9485-4968>**Abstract.**

The toddler is one of the stages of children's development in which they thrive and grow rapidly so they need good nutrition and stimulation from their parents. However, not every toddler is directly raised by their parents as the main caregivers. They are being forced to be taken care of by others such as nannies or other family members like grandparents, etc. This research aims to compare the nutritional status of toddlers with those growing up conditions. The research was a comparative study. The population was mothers who had toddlers and samples were taken by purposive sampling technique with a total of 97 mothers. This research was conducted at Payung Sekaki Health Center, Pekanbaru. Data were taken by child-care questionnaires and anthropometry observation sheet (weight per age) then data were analyzed by Chi-square test. The Chi-square test found that 56 children that were directly cared for by parents had normal nutrition and 7 were not. Meanwhile, of children whose caregivers were other than parents, 28 were in a normal nutrition state and 6 children were not ( $p$ -value 0.369;  $\alpha$  0.05). This study concluded that no difference was observed in nutritional status between toddlers that directly cared for by their parents and others who were not. Therefore, further research is needed regarding other factors that are predictors of nutritional status in toddlers.

**Keywords:** nutritional status, toddler, parents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Age under five years is a golden age and a critical period for children [1] [5]. It is an important period to optimize the growth and development of children, so children during this age need nutrition and stimulation to achieve optimal growth and development. Children's growth can be optimized by meeting their nutritional needs, while development can be maximized by providing a stimulus. A children's growth can be assessed by using anthropometry, which compares their weight and height with age.

Toddlers are of the age stages from 12 months to 36 months or children aged 1-3 years [9] [10], but sometimes they cannot be taken care of directly by parents as their main caregivers, so they should look for other people such as a nanny, grandparents, other family members. One of the cares received by toddlers is the fulfillment of nutritional

Corresponding Author: Ganis Indriati; email: [ganis.indriati@gmail.com](mailto:ganis.indriati@gmail.com)**Published** 10 February 2023

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needs. The nutrition provided directly by the mother as the main caregiver will certainly be different from that provided by others other than the mother and will affect the nutritional status of the toddler.

However, there is a fact that the substitute caregiver does not necessarily have the same sense of responsibility as the mother who is the main caregiver for her child, so there is a possibility that toddlers may experience problems related to their nutritional needs. This is supported by the results of research which found that there are differences in growth and development between children who are taken care of by parents and those who are taken care by other than their parents in Pekanbaru [6]. Research with the title parenting affects the nutritional status of toddlers, which was conducted in Ponorogo also found something similar, there was a relationship between parenting patterns and the nutritional status of toddlers [7]. The nutrition provided directly by the mothers as the main caregivers will certainly differ in quality and quantity compared to ones provided by others than the mothers and will affect the nutritional status of the toddlers. Research conducted by (Nurmasari, 2019) showed that the nutritional status of children cared for by parents was 59.6% (28 toddlers) with good nutritional status and the remaining 40.4% (19 toddlers) experienced less and better nutritional problems, while the nutritional status of children who are cared for by housemaids is 42.6% (20 toddlers) with good nutritional status and the remaining 57.4% (27 toddlers) have malnutrition problems. The results of this study indicate that children who are cared for by maids are more malnourished than their parents. Malnutrition conditions in children can increase the risk of illness and even death for children and affect the health status of children in the future. The prevalence of stunting in Indonesia, based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health until 2019 was 27.7%, and this figure was still far from the WHO standard, which is a maximum of 20% of the total number of children under five in a country. Riau Province is ranked 27th in Indonesia for the category of under-five with malnutrition, with a percentage of 7.4% (Health, 2021). Nutrition problems such as stunting, and malnutrition are closely related to community behavior and parenting.

Every child must get adequate nutrition, both cared for by parents and by someone other than parents. This is what prompted researchers to conduct this research and formulate research problems to compare the nutritional status of toddlers who are taken care of by parents and other than parents.

## 2. METHODS

## 2.1. Study design and participant

This is comparative research. The population in this study were all mothers who had toddlers in the work area of the Payung Sekaki Health Center. Sample selection using purposive sampling. The sample was selected based on the inclusion criteria, namely, mothers who have children aged 12 months - 36 months, are physically and mentally healthy, and are willing to participate in the study. The number of samples obtained in this study was 97 respondents.

## 2.2. Data collection

This research has received ethical approval from the Ethic Committee of Nursing and Health Research, Faculty of Nursing, the University of Riau with the number 303/UN.19.5.1.8/KEPK.FKp/2021. Data collection was carried out on September 2021 – November 2021. All research respondents had signed informed consent before filling out the questionnaires.

## 2.3. Instrument

Data collection in this study was carried out by filling out questionnaire sheets and observation sheets. This research questionnaire consisted of demographic data including age, education, work, and relationship with children. To see the nutritional status of children, researchers used an anthropometry observation sheet (weight per age), to determine the nutritional status of a toddler after measurement of body weight (weight and age). The data were analyzed using chi-square analysis with a 95% confidence interval (CI) and 5% alpha.

## 3. RESULTS

Mother's characteristics, who became respondents in this study consisted of age, education, and occupation. For the characteristics of the respondent's children consisted of the age and the gender of the child.

Table 3.1 it can be observed that the characteristics of respondents by age, more respondents aged 26-35 years, as many as 57 people (58.8%). Respondents, mostly 53 people or 54.6% have senior high school for education and choose to become

TABLE 1: Characteristics of respondents.

No	Characteristic	Amount (n)	Percentage (%)
1.	Age		
	< 17 years old	6	6,2
	17 – 25 years old	9	9,3
	26 – 35 years old	57	58,8
	36 – 45 years old	25	25,8
2.	Education		
	Elementary school	3	3,1
	Junior High School	23	23,7
	Senior High School	53	54,6
	Academy / University	18	18,6
3.	Occupation		
	Housewives	71	74,2
	Government employees	1	1,0
	Private sector employee	7	6,2
	Entrepreneur	10	10,3
	Laborer	3	3,1
	Others	5	5,2
4.	Relationship with children		
	Parents	93	95,9
	Others than parents	4	4,1
	TOTAL	97	100

housewives for 71 people (74,2%) and an average of 93 respondents (95.9%) are direct parents of the children they care for.

TABLE 2: Relation between research variables (nutritional status and caregivers for toddlers).

Variable	Caregiver		Total	p value
	Parent	Others than Parent		
Nutritional Status (weight/age)				
Normal	56	28	84	0,369
Abnormal	7	6	13	
Total	63	34	97	

## 4. DISCUSSION

Erikson [8] states in the theory of eight stages of development that ages 25-65 years are included in the adult category. Individual characteristics at this stage are starting to make a commitment by establishing a meaningful relationship with someone, namely

marriage. The theory of age periods and developmental tasks by Havighurts (Berman, 2012) states that individuals in early adulthood have several developmental tasks including starting a family, raising children (rearing children) and managing a home.

This condition is found in the respondents in the study. Respondents are in the category of early adulthood who are or have started a family, raising, and caring for their children, some of whom are still toddlers. The majority of respondents in this study are housewives so they can devote their time and attention to taking care of their children and family. As a housewife, respondents will have more time to spend with their children and families. They can also use their time to add information and knowledge related to health or child and family care. This information and knowledge can be obtained from the internet, social media, or the community around the mother such as friends, other mothers, or health cadres. As a result, their knowledge will increase and not be limited by the education they have received previously because most of the respondents are senior high school graduates. Senior high school graduates, based on the National Education System [10] are included in the secondary education level, which is a continuation of basic education, elementary school, and junior high school, and below higher education (diploma, bachelor, or masters). Whatever level the individual has completed, indicates the active effort he has made to increase the intelligence and skills he needs in life.

Research also found that the most toddlers who participated in this study were aged 12-24 months. Children at the age of 12-24 months, have started to eat the same food as their family (Organization, 2010). So whatever food was consumed by the family, the child would also consume it. Family conditions can affect family food consumption, such as the economy, mother's knowledge, culture, religion and so on and toddler will also experience it. If the things that affect the consumption of family food were good, then toddler's nutritional needs of course would be met properly, health would be optimal so that it could support the growth and development of the toddler.

The gender of the toddlers who participated in this study was mostly women, 50 people (51.5%). This adjusted to the conditions at the research site, and it turned out that more mothers had female toddlers. But gender was not a specific feature to determine nutritional status or childcare.

Based on statistical tests there is no relationship between the nutritional status of toddlers and the care received by children (p value 0.369; alpha 0.05). The findings could mean that the normal nutritional status achieved by children is not influenced by parenting, especially mothers. This is of course different from the fact that without the role of mothers, the nutritional needs of families, especially children, will not be met.

Mothers are the main caregivers for their children, who will do anything for the good of their children, including the growth and development and health of their children. Mother is even willing to become a housewife who spends her time only at home, focusing her attention on taking care of her child and family. This fact is supported by the findings of a study in Klaten District about the relationship between work and knowledge of maternal nutrition with the nutritional status of children under five, who found that working mothers will have an impact on the low time together between mothers and children so that children's food intake is not well controlled and the mother's attention to child development is reduced [12]. The impact of working mothers also depends on the type of work the mother does.

The results of the study, which did not show a significant relationship between nutritional status and parenting by parents or other than parents, could be caused by sampling technique used in research. This causes the data obtained to be heterogeneous, thus affecting the results of the study.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that children are cared for by their parents. The health of children who are cared for by parents has normal nutritional status. The results of this study also show that there are differences in the nutritional status of children who are cared for by parents and children who are cared for by someone other than their parents.

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## 6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

In this study, there is no conflict of interest.

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