

Original Article

A Qualitative Study on Community Service "Baby Massage Courses for Mothers"

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Abstract: Baby massage provides benefits to babies, including improving sleep quality, reducing stress and anxiety, stimulating weight gain and optimizing baby development. The implementation of baby massage practices by parents, especially mothers, is based on positive knowledge, attitudes and support from the family. The aim of this community service activity is to provide mothers with experience in directly practicing baby massage, so that mothers will feel capable and confident in massaging babies in order to get positive benefits for the mother and baby. The community service activity is in the form of a class for baby massage targeting mothers with babies aged 0-1 years in the target area of 5 mothers. Evaluation of the effectiveness of this community service uses qualitative evaluation with the aim of exploring mothers' experiences of attending face-to-face baby massage classes. Community service activities can increase knowledge and confidence in massage and are beneficial for mothers and babies. Health workers can consider encouraging mothers around them to empower themselves to meet their baby's stimulation needs with good baby massage.

Keywords: Mothers, Infant, Massage, Growth, Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Baby massage is a cultural property in various countries [1]. Baby massage can provide benefits to babies, including improving sleep quality, reducing stress and anxiety, stimulating weight gain and optimizing baby development [2], [3]. In a systematic review, it was concluded that baby massage that was done regularly could increase body weight compared to the group that did not receive regular massage. Massage given by mother, father or other family members is the best massage because it gives physiological changes, especially fulfilling the need for love provided by the family [4]. Baby massage can also have a positive effect on the psychological aspects of parents, especially mothers, including: reducing anxiety and depression, increasing bonding and attachment, increasing self-confidence and happiness in caring for the baby and optimizing the breastfeeding process [5], [6]. The interactions that arise during massage between mother and baby have a positive impact on both parties.

The implementation of baby massage practices by parents, especially mothers, is based on positive knowledge, attitudes and support from the family. Correct knowledge and positive support from the surrounding environment will form a confident attitude among parents, especially mothers, in practicing baby massage directly and routinely [7]. Mothers' knowledge and skills about baby massage are formed by information from health workers during the period of treatment at health facilities [4]. A qualitative study concluded that online baby massage class meetings facilitated by certified trainers can have a positive impact in the form of increasing bonding and attachment between mother and baby [8]. Apart from that, baby massage education carried out by parents using an Android application also has a positive impact as a source of information that can be accessed at any time and has an impact on increasing the baby's weight and height after massage is done regularly for 3 months [7]. The intervention of providing education and assistance to mothers has also been statistically proven to increase mothers' confidence in practicing baby massage directly. Education is provided using the lecture method and demonstrating or practicing directly the proper and correct steps for massaging a baby [9], [10]

The International Association of Infant Massage (IAIM) is an international organization that focuses on training and certifying baby massage instructors who provide baby massage classes to equip parents with knowledge related to baby care and massage skills. This certification requires instructors to complete classes in educating parents face-to-face 5 times with a certain curriculum [11]. The aims of this community service is to train parents/mothers in baby massage skills as well as explore experiences after attending face-to-face classes as an effort to improve the quality of baby massage classes in the future.

The target of this community service activity is the area under the supervision of the Midwifery Study Program, Faculty of Medicine, Sebelas Maret University, and Surakarta, Indonesia, that is Ngogresan, Jebres District, Surakarta District, and Central Java, Indonesia. Community service activities are also based on preliminary study data, where 6 mothers who



have babies only do baby massage at the nearest health facility and do not feel they have good knowledge about baby massage so they are not confident to practice it even though they have received information from social media. Based on these problems, the service team conducted a class for baby massage to train mothers in practicing baby massage. The aim of this activity is to provide mothers with experience in directly practicing baby massage, so that mothers will feel capable and confident in massaging babies in order to get positive benefits for the mother and baby.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A. Design

The community service activity was in the form of a class for baby massage targeting mothers with babies aged 0-1 years in the target area of 5 mothers. Evaluation of the effectiveness of this community service used qualitative evaluation with the aim of exploring mothers' experiences of attending face-to-face baby massage classes. The interview guide was based on the evaluation guide for the implementation of baby massage classes which had been carried out by IAIM Indonesia certified instructors [8].

The intervention in the form of a baby massage class was carried out in accordance with the IAIM curriculum with 5 meetings with a gap of 7 days between each meeting. The time gap between classes gives mothers the opportunity to practice baby massage independently in their daily lives and absorb the material provided in each session. The curriculum prepared by the service refers to the curriculum set by IAIM, which is a global organization for baby massage. The division of the meeting is based on the practice of massaging the parts of the baby's body. The curriculum implemented in the parent class for baby massage includes:

1. Meeting 1: Practice: Foot massage, theory: baby massage concept.
2. Meeting 2: Practice: Abdominal massage and abdominal colic massage, theory: benefits of baby massage and abdominal colic.
3. Meeting 3: Practice: Massage the chest and hands, theory: baby signals.
- Meeting 4: Practice: Massage the face and back, theory: use of oil and contraindications.
4. Meeting 5: Practice: Gentle movement or baby gym, theory: mother-baby bonding, massage preparation.

Community service activities will be carried out in November – December 2023 in the multi-purpose room RW 18 Ngoresan, Jebres District, Surakarta District, Central Java, Indonesia. Each class lasts 85 minutes with the following activity structure:

Table 1: Rundown of Community Service Baby Massage Courses for Mothers

LEVEL	EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES	PRESIDENT
Introduction (5 minutes)	1. Opening: - Introduction of the instructor and participants Ice breaking by singing	Instructor
Delivery of material and direct practice (60 minutes)	1. Explain the theme of the class that will be followed 2. Ask about the obstacles experienced by the mother in previous practical assignments (specifically meetings 2 – 5) Practicing and accompanying baby massage according to the curriculum (the instructor uses a doll and the mother practices directly on the baby)	Instructor
Closing (20 minutes)	1. Summarize the movement verbally 2. Evaluation and discussion with questions and answers 3. Providing independent practice assignments at home	Instructor

B. Participants and Recruitment

Community service participants was mothers with babies aged <12 months and complete 5 full infant massage classes. Sampling for this activity was carried out using simple random sampling based on willingness to attend 5 sessions. The steps in participant recruitment was (1) reaching participants by publishing information about baby massage classes through invitations sent to health cadres in Jebres sub-district, (2) contacting participants who are willing to take part in community service, (3) explaining a brief description of the study and guidelines from face-to-face baby massage class, (4) signing informed consent. Participant inclusion criteria were: voluntary participation, mothers with babies aged <12 months, mothers attending 5 sessions of baby massage classes, and the ability to practice massage at home.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

Analysis of the success of community service used a qualitative survey with in-depth interviews to collect comprehensive primary data. Data processing includes: making notes and transcripts, classifying data and information, and drawing conclusions from data analysis. The data collected in the research were (1) characteristics of the mother and baby and (2) the response felt by the mother after attending 5 sessions. Data collection uses research instruments in the form of interview guides based on previous research including:

Table 2: Themes and Subthemes

Themes	Subthemes
Favorite Sessions	Which massage session did you like the most?
New knowledge and skills they gathered	What have you learned about baby massage?
Benefits	Benefits obtained from baby massage classes.
	The feelings after taking a baby massage class.
	Feelings after massaging a baby.
	What benefits do you get from massaging your baby regularly at home.
Barriers during infant massage class	Obstacles experienced while attending class.
Mother's hope	Hope for the baby in the future.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic characteristics

Our community service participants are 5 mothers who have attended 5 sessions. Furthermore, participant characteristics are presented in table 1.

Table 3: Characteristic

Characteristic	n (%)
Age	
20 – 35 years	4 (80%)
< 20 - > 35 years	1 (20%)
Education	
Primary	1 (20%)
Secondary	
Height	4 (80%)
Work	
Private	1 (20%)
Civil servants/TNI/Polri	
Housewife	4 (80%)
Parity	
Primipara	2 (40%)
Multiparous	3 (60%)
Grandemultipara	
The distance between the baby and the previous child	
The first child	2 (40%)
Less than 2 years	1 (20%)
More than 2 years	2 (40%)
Baby's age	
1-6 months	2 (40%)
7 – 12 months	3 (60%)
Types of Childbirth	
Vaginal birth	2 (40%)
Cesarean birth	3 (60%)
Gestational age at birth	
Pre term	0
A term	5 (100%)
Post Term	0
Weight at birth	

<2.500 gram	1 (20%)
≥2500 – 4.000 gram	4 (80%)
> 4.000 gram	0

B. Thematic Content Analysis

Analysis and discussion of this qualitative data is divided into six themes, including: favorite sessions, new knowledge and skills, benefits, obstacles during baby massage classes, and mothers' hopes.

a) Favorite session

Most participants said their favorite session was massage on the feet and 1 participant liked the baby gym session.

"Massaging the foot area tends to be easier to practice and memorize." (T, 44 yo)

"It's easier on the feet, whether taught or practiced at home." (M, 33 yo)

"When I was taught, I preferred massaging the foot area and I always started from the feet by looking at the baby." (I, 28 yo)

"The easiest massage to do is massaging the legs and stomach area." (D, 23 yo)

R2 "baby gym is my favorite!!!! The baby feels exercised with this movement." (C, 27 yo)

The massage of the extremity areas taught in the first session was a favorite among the participants. This massage was also a favorite part of the course in previous research [8].

B) New Knowledge and Skills

The baby class was designed by IAIM which is a global organization for baby massage with 5 sessions based on the practice of baby body parts. The time gap between classes gives mothers the opportunity to practice baby massage independently in their daily lives and absorb the material provided in each session. Most of the experience, knowledge and skills obtained by mothers are almost the same, including:

"Knowing the correct baby massage technique". (D, 23 yo)

"Knowing the correct massage techniques and the reasons for each part of the body to be massaged. So far I have been using online media to learn baby massage and it turns out the movements are not much different from what I learned in this class, but the instructor explains the reasons behind each movement, so I am more confident in doing the massage." (I, 28 yo). The IAIM curriculum provides material that supports the practice of baby massage at each session, for example at the first meeting the instructor explains the basic concepts of baby massage. The implementation of this baby massage class supports the development of mothers' knowledge and increases their self-confidence to practice it in everyday life. Extensive knowledge makes a person more prepared and mature in dealing with problems. The results of this community service are consistent with several previous studies which concluded that having baby massage classes attended by mothers can increase mothers' knowledge and independence in caring for their babies on a daily basis [4], [7], [9], [10].

C. Benefits

a) Benefits Obtained from Baby Massage Classes

This baby massage facilitates the mother's confidence to practice massage directly on her baby. A total of 3 mothers said that they were able to massage their babies correctly and confidently. Meanwhile, 1 participant said that this class facilitated a discussion forum that was useful for her. "Can do baby massage correctly and confidently." (D, 23 yo, T, 44 yo and I 28 yo)

"It's really fun because you get new friends to share how to care for babies. I had to wait 10 years for this baby, so I really needed a friend to discuss whether what I was doing for the baby was right or not." (M, 33 yo). The baby massage class instructor facilitates the transfer of knowledge and skills to mothers and encourages discussions between participants about how the experience of baby care is in everyday life. The curriculum designed by IAIM requires instructors to take time to discuss with mothers about difficulties when practicing at home and how mothers experience daily care related to the baby's growth and development. This is compatible with the implementation of baby massage classes using the previous IAIM curriculum which concluded that one of the benefits was increasing friendships and peer discussions in daily baby care [8].

b) The Feeling after Taking a Baby Massage Class

Most participants stated that baby massage done at home during class can increase the mother's bonding with the baby.

"I feel more able to interact by making eye contact when the baby is being massaged. In the past I only sang, but now I can give more touch." (D, 23 yo)

"Feeling a stronger bond with the baby and no need to go to a health worker to massage the baby." (I, 28 yo).

One of the respondents also felt very happy because she felt she could do an active role in stimulating his child's growth and development.

"I feel that I can make another positive contribution to my child's growth and development, hopefully after this his sleep will be better and his weight gain will suit the existing curve." (M, 33 yo).

Good parent-child attachment is important and means the child feels safe, resulting in better conditions for exploration and development [1]. An RCT study in Indonesia concluded that 120 mothers who massaged their babies (aged 3-6 months), had increased bonding attachment, increased infant sleep duration, decreased the number and duration of baby awakenings [12].

c) What Benefits Do You Get From Massaging Your Baby Regularly At Home?

All participants in the baby massage class responded positively to the effects of baby massage carried out regularly at home. A total of 5 mothers said that the obvious effect was that the baby's sleep felt sounder.

"The baby falls asleep more soundly so that when he breastfeeds he feels stronger and more frequent, this makes me get more breast milk. It's very pleasant, considering that I am 44 years old and previously I had complaints that my breast milk felt low." (T, 44 yo).

"When a baby sleeps more soundly, he will be less fussy." (C, 27 yo)

The impact felt on babies is improving sleep quality. Adequate sleep can be associated with a baby's positive character and is a factor in development and growth during the first 5 years of life [1]. The community service results experienced by participants are in line with research results which state that massage can improve the quality of baby's sleep. Regular massage can stimulate the production of endorphins which can reduce the baby's pain and discomfort so that the baby is calmer and reduces the duration of crying [5].

d) Barriers during Infant Massage Class

The obstacles experienced by participants in the baby massage class were almost the same as the results of previous research, that babies were sleepy or fussy during class because it was held during nap time.

"There are no obstacles from infrastructure, mothers and instructors, it's just that my baby often falls asleep while carrying out new practical sessions, so sometimes I rely on the modules given and my memory in class." (T, 44 yo).

"There are times when my child falls asleep in class during a new practice session." (I, 28 yo).

The best time to do baby massage is during the baby's quiet but awake phase, not right after a feed or when he's sleeping. Community service activities are carried out in the morning so it is possible for babies to still be sleeping. This constraint is also a constraint implemented in previous research [8].

e) Mother's Hope

Most of the participants' hopes after attending the baby massage class are hopes that their baby will be a healthy child with proper growth and development. This is also in accordance with previous research which states that the baby can grow and develop as it should.

"I hope to be able to accompany my baby so that his growth and development will be good and later he will become a child who will be useful to society." (D, 23 yo)

"I got a baby after waiting several years, I hope that after I get this knowledge I can contribute to maximum growth and development. Apart from that, I will not stop studying in other classes so I can gain knowledge about childcare." (M, 33 yo).

This research is a development of previous research and is a program of IAIM. Several limitations in previous research were not found in this community service activity, for example internet problems and unclear movements. The limitation in this community service activity is that the time allocation still has to be adjusted to the baby's sleep pattern, so that in the future, mothers can freely practice massaging on babies.

IV. CONCLUSION

Community service activities carried out directly for mothers in Central Java, Indonesia have gone well and can increase mothers' knowledge and confidence in massage and are beneficial for mothers and babies as well as reducing mothers' financial expenses for massage from health workers. Furthermore, health workers can consider encouraging

mothers around them to empower themselves to fulfill their baby's stimulation needs with baby massage either during pregnancy or when the baby is 0 – 1 year old.

Interest Conflicts

The authors declare that they have no interest conflicts.

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