

# The Role of Health Communication in Addressing Stunting in Bandung Regency

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**Abstract.** Based on data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health, the prevalence of stunting in Bandung Regency in 2022 reached around 31%, which is higher than the national figure in Indonesia. This stunting issue can have negative impacts on the health, education, and future productivity of affected children. Therefore, addressing stunting in Bandung Regency is crucial to improve the quality of life for children and the community as a whole. The aim of this study is to describe the process and role of Health Communication in addressing stunting in Bandung Regency. A qualitative research method was used, where data was collected through a literature review of various relevant sources, such as journals and reports. The research found that health communication can play a significant role in addressing stunting by providing accurate and targeted information, motivating behavior change, and increasing community participation in health programs. At the initial stage, health communication can help increase the community's understanding of the importance of nutrition and healthy eating habits, as well as provide information and support to parents in providing adequate nutrition for their children. The study concludes that effective health communication can help address the problem of stunting in Bandung Regency and can provide significant benefits for health practitioners, researchers, and the government in making more effective policies to address this problem.

## 1.Introduction

Stunting, or chronic malnutrition, is a public health problem that often occurs in developing countries, including Indonesia. Stunting refers to a condition in which a child's growth is inhibited, resulting in the child's height not being appropriate for their age[1]. Stunting occurs in children due to malnutrition, both macro and micro, during early childhood growth. Stunting has a negative impact on the health and quality of life of children, including a higher risk of death, a lack of learning ability, and a risk of chronic disease in adulthood[2].

Health communication plays an important role in addressing stunting. To address the problem of stunting, prevention and management efforts involving various parties are needed, including health workers, parents, and the community[3]. In this case, health communication can help provide accurate and

targeted information, motivate behavior change, and increase community participation in health programs[4].

Bandung Regency is one of the areas in Indonesia that has a serious stunting problem. According to data from the Bandung Regency Health Office in 2022, the stunting rate in this area reached 31.1%. This shows that many children in Bandung Regency still experience stunting and require serious management efforts[5]. In addition to Bandung Regency, other areas in West Java also have relatively high prevalence rates. The overall picture of stunting prevalence rates in West Java in 2022, which are among the top five, is presented in Table 1.

**Tabel 1.** Five districts with the highest prevalence of stunted toddlers in West Java in 2022

City/District	Prevalence of Stunted Children
Garut	35.3%
Cianjur	33.7%
Bandung	31.1%
Sumedang	29.4%
Tasikmalaya	28.9%

Source: Researchers processed from katadata.com (2022)

Several previous studies have shown that health communication plays an important role in addressing stunting. For example, a study conducted by Sutisna et al. [6] A review of child stunting determinants in Indonesia. This paper concludes that stunting in Indonesian children is a complex and multifactorial problem. Efforts to address stunting must involve various sectors, including health, education, sanitation, and the economy. In addition, these efforts must be integrated and sustained to achieve optimal results in addressing stunting in Indonesian children. The study conducted by Dearden et al.[7] titled "The Impact of a Large-Scale Social and Behavior Change Communication Intervention in the Lake Zone Region of Tanzania on Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Related to Stunting Prevention" aimed to evaluate the impact of social and behavior change communication intervention in preventing stunting in children in the Lake Zone region of Tanzania. The results showed that the intervention had a positive impact on the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of mothers in preventing stunting in children. After the intervention, there was a significant increase in mothers' knowledge about stunting prevention in children, as well as an improvement in practices that can prevent stunting, such as exclusive breastfeeding, balanced supplementary feeding, and the use of good sanitation facilities.

Referring to previous research, the aim of this study is to examine how the use of health communication can help address the problem of stunting in Bandung Regency. This study will use journal and report sources related to the relevant topic, as well as collect data from existing literature. By conducting this research, it is hoped to provide additional information and insights into how the use of health communication can help address the problem of stunting in Bandung Regency, thus helping the government in making more effective policies to address this problem. Hopefully, this research can provide significant benefits for researchers, health practitioners, as well as the government and the people of Bandung Regency as a whole.

## 2. Method

This study is a literature review conducted using a qualitative approach. The data in the study are secondary data obtained through a search of news from mass media about stunting in Bandung District. The initial data findings on stunting are then combined with scientific studies, in this case, the concept and theory of health communication used in addressing stunting. The literature review method is carried out by searching and collecting information from various sources, such as journals, books, and articles related to the research topic. The steps taken by the researcher are as follows: First, determining the topic, which is the handling of stunting; second, determining the inclusion and exclusion criteria to be used in the selection of information sources on health communication studies that have been previously studied by the researcher and determining information on stunting according to government releases; third, conducting a search and selection of information sources that are appropriate to the research topic and inclusion and exclusion criteria that have been determined; fourth, assessing the quality and relevance of the information sources that have been collected, so the journal used as a source is selected based on the most appropriate study and publication date; fifth, analyzing and summarizing all the information. The data search was conducted in November 2022.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Health communication is a communication process aimed at increasing the understanding and behavior of the community related to health. Health communication plays an important role in addressing stunting as it can help provide accurate and targeted information about stunting prevention and treatment[8].

At the initial stage, health communication can help increase the community's understanding of the importance of nutrition and healthy eating habits, as well as provide information and support to parents in providing adequate nutrition for their children. Additionally, through health communication, the community can obtain accurate information about stunting prevention and treatment steps that can be applied at home, such as selecting quality food ingredients and providing healthy food variations for children.

Health communication can also motivate behavior change related to stunting prevention and treatment. In this case, health communication must be done effectively by providing clear, easily understandable, and relevant information to the community's needs. Additionally, support from healthcare workers is needed in providing education about stunting, so that the community can more easily understand and apply the information provided[9].

Furthermore, through health communication, it is possible to increase community participation in health programs aimed at preventing and addressing stunting. In this case, collaboration is needed between healthcare workers, the government, and the community in addressing this health issue. Thus, it is hoped that with effective health communication, it can help increase the community's understanding and behavior related to stunting prevention and treatment[10].

**Table 2.** Health Communication Role in Addressing Stunting

<b>Forms of Health Communication</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Health Education</b>	Conveying information about nutrition and healthy eating habits to the community. Effective health education can help improve the knowledge and behavior of the community related to the prevention and treatment of stunting.
<b>Use of Social Media</b>	Using social media as a health communication tool to increase the knowledge and motivation of parents in providing nutritious food and avoiding unhealthy food for their children.

<b>Family Involvement</b>	<b>Carrying out health communication through family involvement in health programs, such as providing support and motivation to children to adopt healthy eating habits.</b>
<b>Health Promotion</b>	Carrying out health promotion through health campaigns, such as providing information materials about stunting and how to prevent it to the community, or through education at health centers.

Source: adapted from the book Health Communication: From Theory to Practice, 2nd Edition.

### Health education

Health education plays a crucial role in addressing stunting, a condition caused by inadequate nutrition, poor feeding practices, and repeated infections during the critical period of growth and development. The goal of health education is to increase awareness and knowledge of the community about stunting and its prevention and treatment. Through health education, people can learn about the importance of proper nutrition and healthy eating habits, such as exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life, introducing a variety of nutritious foods, and providing adequate amounts of protein, vitamins, and minerals.

Effective health education can improve the knowledge and behavior of the community related to stunting prevention and treatment. Health education can be carried out through various channels, such as community meetings, health fairs, social media, and print materials. Health education can also involve the participation of health workers, who can provide information and guidance to parents and caregivers on how to recognize the signs of stunting, how to prepare nutritious meals, and how to promote healthy feeding practices for infants and young children.

Furthermore, health education can also involve family members in health programs, providing support and motivation for children to adopt healthy eating habits. It is essential to ensure that health education is delivered in a clear, simple, and culturally appropriate manner to maximize its effectiveness. Through effective health education, individuals and communities can take necessary steps to prevent and treat stunting, ensuring healthy growth and development for future generations[11]

### Use of Social Media

The use of social media as a health communication tool has become increasingly popular in recent years, and can be a valuable strategy for addressing stunting. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube can reach a wide audience, including parents, caregivers, and healthcare providers, and can provide targeted messaging and education about stunting prevention and treatment.[12]

One of the primary advantages of social media is its ability to reach large and diverse audiences quickly and easily. Platforms such as Facebook and Twitter can be used to share educational materials about stunting, including infographics, videos, and articles. Social media can also be used to promote events related to stunting prevention, such as workshops, health fairs, and community meetings. By leveraging social media, healthcare providers and public health organizations can increase awareness about stunting and encourage community members to participate in efforts to prevent it.

Social media can also be a useful tool for engaging with parents and caregivers directly. Through social media platforms, healthcare providers and public health organizations can share tips and strategies for promoting healthy eating habits and providing adequate nutrition to children. Social media can also be used to share success stories and testimonials from parents who have successfully overcome stunting in their children, which can help motivate other parents to make changes in their own families[13]



In addition to its reach and engagement potential, social media can also be a cost-effective strategy for stunting prevention. Creating social media content is often less expensive than traditional advertising or print materials, and can reach a wider audience in a shorter amount of time. Social media can also be used to facilitate two-way communication between healthcare providers and the community, allowing for questions and concerns to be addressed in real-time.

However, it is important to note that there are some potential drawbacks to using social media as a health communication tool. One of the primary concerns is the potential for misinformation and misinterpretation of health information. Because social media is largely unregulated, inaccurate or false information about stunting prevention and treatment can easily spread. It is important for healthcare providers and public health organizations to ensure that the information they share is accurate, evidence-based, and comes from trusted sources.

Another challenge with social media is the potential for low levels of engagement and attention from users. With so much content available on social media platforms, it can be difficult to capture the attention of users long enough to communicate important health messages. It is important to create content that is visually appealing, easy to understand, and relevant to the target audience in order to maximize engagement.

Overall, the use of social media as a health communication tool in stunting prevention and treatment can be an effective strategy for reaching large and diverse audiences, engaging with parents and caregivers, and promoting healthy behaviors. However, it is important to ensure that the information shared is accurate and evidence-based, and that efforts are made to capture and maintain the attention of social media users[14].

### **Family Involvement**

Family involvement plays a crucial role in addressing stunting, as parents and caregivers are responsible for providing adequate nutrition and care to their children. Health communication strategies can be used to encourage family involvement in health programs and to provide support and motivation to children to adopt healthy eating habits[15].

One way to involve families in addressing stunting is through the provision of information and education about nutrition and healthy eating habits. This can include workshops or counseling sessions for parents to learn about the importance of nutrient-rich foods and how to prepare healthy meals. Health communication can also be used to provide tips and resources for parents on how to make healthier food choices for their children. In addition, involving families in health programs can help to increase participation and motivation to adopt healthy behaviors. This can include involving family members in nutrition education sessions or support groups, as well as providing incentives or rewards for families who actively participate in health programs. Ultimately, family involvement is key to addressing stunting as it empowers parents and caregivers to take an active role in improving the health and wellbeing of their children. By using health communication strategies to provide education and support, families can be equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to prevent and treat stunting.

### **Health Promotion**

Health promotion plays an important role in addressing stunting by raising awareness about the issue and encouraging individuals and communities to take action to prevent and treat stunting. Health promotion can be carried out through various channels, such as health campaigns, community outreach programs, and education at health centers. One effective way to promote health and prevent stunting is through community-based campaigns. These campaigns can involve the distribution of information materials such as pamphlets, posters, and flyers, as well as the organization of community events and activities such as cooking demonstrations, nutrition workshops, and health fairs. These activities can provide the community with practical information on how to prevent stunting and promote healthy eating habits.

In addition to community-based campaigns, health promotion can also be carried out through education at health centers. Health workers can provide information on the causes of stunting and the importance of proper nutrition, as well as offer guidance on how to prepare nutritious meals for children. This can be especially important for families with limited resources or those living in areas with limited access to nutritious foods. Overall, health promotion is an important strategy in addressing stunting, as it can increase awareness, promote healthy behaviors, and encourage community participation in prevention and treatment efforts. By combining education, community outreach, and targeted campaigns, health promotion can help to create a culture of health that supports healthy growth and development in children[16].

#### 4. Conclusion

The conclusion of the role of health communication in addressing stunting, which consists of Health Education, Use of Social Media, Family Involvement, and Health Promotion, is as follows: Health Education: Health communication through health education is essential in addressing stunting. By providing appropriate education about balanced nutrition and the importance of nutrient-rich food intake, people can understand the importance of healthy eating habits and stunting prevention. Use of Social Media: The use of social media can help expand the reach of health messages related to stunting. Through social media, information about stunting prevention can be effectively conveyed to the wider community, including families and parents who play a crucial role in preventing stunting in children. Family Involvement: Families play a crucial role in preventing stunting in children. Effective health communication to families can help increase their awareness of the importance of healthy eating habits and adequate nutrition for their children. By involving families in stunting prevention efforts, it will be easier to achieve optimal results. Health Promotion: Effective health communication through health promotion can help raise public awareness of stunting and its adverse effects on children's health. Effective health promotion can also help change people's behaviors so that they pay more attention to their children's eating habits and nutrition. Therefore, the role of health communication in addressing stunting is crucial and plays a vital part in providing information about stunting prevention, educating the community, changing people's behaviors, and raising awareness about stunting. In this regard, Health Education, Use of Social Media, Family Involvement, and Health Promotion are integral parts of health communication strategies in addressing stunting

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