

Editorial

Unwanted pregnancy as a critical factor of stunting in Indonesia Linda Yanti ¹²⁷, Supriyadi ², Agus Santosa ³

¹ Midwifery Department, Health Science Faculty, Universitas Harapan Bangsa, Banyumas, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

² Department of Public Health, Faculty of Health Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia

³ Department of Medical-Surgical Nursing, Health Faculty, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Banyumas, Central Java, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Specific and sensitive nutrition fulfillment programs have been carried out to reduce the incidence of stunting in Indonesia, but the results are still not optimal. Handling stunting should not only focus on the nutrition fulfillment sector. A fundamental factor to consider as the root cause of high stunting in Indonesia is unwanted or unplanned pregnancies.

S tunting is one of the nutritional problems faced in the world, especially in poor and developing countries. In Indonesia, the problem of stunting is the current government's focus because of its high prevalence, 24.4% in 2021 and 21.6% in 2022. Various programs have been implemented, such as fulfilling specific and sensitive nutrition, but this can only reduce the prevalence of stunting by around 2.8%. When viewed more deeply, the current handling of stunting only focuses on the nutrition fulfillment sector, not targeting the fundamental variable considered to play a vital role in the root causes of high stunting in Indonesia, namely unwanted or unplanned pregnancies.^{1,2}

Unwanted pregnancy is often associated with an extramarital pregnancy. It is not necessarily the case. There are several other reasons for unwanted pregnancy. It includes the factors of contraceptive failure, pregnancy due to young marriage (mother's age <20 years), and advanced maternal age (mother's age >35 years). In addition, A newly married wife who gets pregnant early (in the first year) may be considered unwanted because the couple has not planned to have a child.³

Currently, the number of adolescent pregnancies recorded in religious courts (underage marriage applications) in 2021 in 60,000 cases, and in 2022 there will be 55,000 cases, primarily due to pregnancy before marriage.⁴ This has not covered the number of extra-marital pregnancies among adults and the pregnancies of contraceptive failure. The figure is unknown because people tend to conceal the fact, which our culture considers a disgrace.^{5,6}



Figure 1. Effects of Unwanted Pregnancy⁷⁻¹⁶

As an unwanted pregnancy occurs, especially among teenagers, it is inevitable that they are not ready physically, mentally, and financially in the preconception periode. These surely will lead to various problems in the prenatal and postnatal phases, impacting the child's growth and development (Figure 1).⁷ Micro and macro nutritional readiness and sufficient prenatal knowledge are essential for a mother. Nutritional unpreparedness for pregnancy or preconception maternal nutritional status affects fetal linear growth and the risk of stunting.⁸

Adolescent mothers cannot ensure adequate nutritional intake for their babies. Pregnant teens will compete for nutrients with the fetus's development as they are still in the growth stage. Thus, the fetus is more at risk of being born with less weight than adult mothers. Unwanted pregnancies can also lead to stress and depression.⁹ They will not care about the condition of their pregnancy and will not do

https://doi.org/10.30595/medisains.v21i1.17414

^{©(2023)} by the Medisains Journal. Readers may use this article as long as the work is properly cited, the use is educational and not for profit, and the work is not altered. More information is available at <u>Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International</u>.

a pregnancy check-up.¹⁰ Instead, they often resort to illegal abortions.¹¹ Even if they give birth, most suffer from postpartum blues.¹²

Due to poor socioeconomic circumstances, most teenage mothers do not have adequate financial resources to meet their baby's needs.¹³ Most of their partners are also teenagers without a steady income. For example, children born from unwanted pregnancies are more likely to be consciously or unconsciously neglected in exclusive breastfeeding. They may also be psychologically unprepared to breastfeed or refuse to do so.¹⁴ This will result in a poor quality of care (child maltreatment)¹⁵ and child neglect.¹⁶ This certainly will affect the growth and development of the child.

A couple should plan their pregnancy carefully because good planning determines the baby's health. It is recommended that couples who have not been ready to have a child should use reliable contraception to avoid unwanted pregnancies. For the government should be able to improve family planning programs, design programs that can reduce the number of child marriages, and programs to prevent unwanted pregnancies, which are the most fundamental factors in the occurrence of stunting in children.

REFERENCES

- Kementrian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia. Hasil Survei Status Gizi Indonesia (SSGI) 2022. Jakarta; 2023.
- Goudet SM, Bogin BA, Madise NJ, Griffiths PL. Nutritional interventions for preventing stunting in children (birth to 59 months) living in urban slums in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC). *Cochrane database Syst Rev.* 2019;6(6):CD011695.

doi:10.1002/14651858.CD011695.pub2

- Supriyadi, Yanti L. Factors analysis of unwanted pregnancies among women childbearing age in Indonesia: analysis of demographic and health survey data in 2017. *Medisains*. 2020;18(3):93-98. doi:10.30595/medisains.v18i3.9201
- Kementrian Pemberdayaan Perempuan Dan Perlindungan Anak Republik Indonesia. Perkawinan Anak Di Indonesia Sudah Mengkhawatirkan. Kemen PPPA. 2023.
- Polis CB, Bradley SEK, Bankole A, Onda T, Croft T, Singh S. Typical-use contraceptive failure rates in 43 countries with Demographic and Health Survey data: summary of a detailed report. *Contraception*. 2016;94(1):11-17. doi:10.1016/j.contraception.2016.03.011
- 6. Bradley SEK, Polis CB, Bankole A, Croft T. Global Contraceptive Failure Rates: Who Is Most at Risk? *Stud Fam Plann*. 2019;50(1):3-24. doi:https://doi.org/10.1111/sifp.12085

- Santosa A, Arif EN, Ghoni DA. Effect of maternal and child factors on stunting: partial least squares structural equation modeling. *Clin Exp Pediatr.* 2022;65(2):90-97. doi:10.3345/cep.2021.00094
- Young MF, Nguyen PH, Gonzalez Casanova I, et al. Role of maternal preconception nutrition on offspring growth and risk of stunting across the first 1000 days in Vietnam: A prospective cohort study. *PLoS One.* 2018;13(8):e0203201-e0203201. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0203201
- Brito CN de O, Alves SV, Ludermir AB, Araújo TVB de. Postpartum depression among women with unintended pregnancy. *Rev Saude Publica*. 2015;49:33. doi:10.1590/s0034-8910.2015049005257
- Hajizadeh M, Nghiem S. Does unwanted pregnancy lead to adverse health and healthcare utilization for mother and child? Evidence from lowand middle-income countries. *Int J Public Health*. 2020;65(4):457-468. doi:10.1007/s00038-020-01358-7
- Fatusi A, Riley T, Kayembe PK, Mabika C. Unintended pregnancy, induced abortion and abortion care-seeking experiences among adolescents in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo: a cross-sectional study. *BMJ Open*. 2021;11(9):e044682. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-044682
- Abbasi S, Chuang CH, Dagher R, Zhu J, Kjerulff K. Unintended pregnancy and postpartum depression among first-time mothers. J Womens Health (Larchmt). 2013;22(5):412-416. doi:10.1089/jwh.2012.3926
- Rahman MS, Howlader T, Masud MS, Rahman ML. Association of Low-Birth Weight with Malnutrition in Children under Five Years in Bangladesh: Do Mother's Education, Socio-Economic Status, and Birth Interval Matter? *PLoS One*. 2016;11(6):e0157814-e0157814. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0157814
- Mikawati, Lusiana E, Hasriany. The Relationship between Exclusive Breastfeeding (ASI) and Mother Heightwith Incident Rates Stunting among Child Age 2-5 Years In Barombong Public Health Center, Gowa, Sulawesi Selatan. *KnE Life Sci.* 2019;4(13):558–567. doi:10.18502/kls.v4i13.5306
- 15. Guterman K. Unintended pregnancy as a predictor of child maltreatment. *Child Abuse Negl.* 2015;48:160-169.

doi:10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.05.014

 Hultstrand JN, Abuelgasim KO, Tydén T, Jonsson M, Maseko N, Målqvist M. The perpetuating cycle of unplanned pregnancy: underlying causes and implications in Eswatini. *Cult Health Sex*. 2021;23(12):1656-1671. doi:10.1080/13691058.2020.1791359