



Education On The Use Of Pumpkin Pudding As A Measure To Control Hypertension In The Community Of RT 10, Jembatan Kecil Village

Fuji ¹, Preti ², Tiara A ³, Tiara E ⁴, Mewi ⁵, Iin ⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} Universitas Dehasen Bengkulu

e-mail: fuji@gmail.com

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Abstract. Hypertension is a public health problem with increasing prevalence and contributing to a high risk of cardiovascular disease. One of the main factors influencing this condition is an unbalanced diet, particularly high salt consumption and low nutritional intake. This community service activity aims to improve community knowledge and skills in managing hypertension through the implementation of a healthy diet based on local foods, specifically the use of pumpkin as a healthy snack alternative. The activity was conducted in Neighborhood Association (RT) 10, Jembatan Kecil Village, and involved 24 women as participants. The methods used included counseling, a demonstration of making pumpkin pudding, and an interactive discussion. The results of the activity showed an increase in participants' understanding of the relationship between diet and blood pressure control, as well as an increased awareness of the importance of choosing low-salt, nutritious snacks. Participants also demonstrated high enthusiasm and readiness to implement healthy eating patterns in their daily lives. Thus, practice-based education and the use of local foods have proven to be an effective and applicable approach in supporting hypertension prevention and control efforts at the community level.

Keywords: *Hypertension; Nutrition Education; Pumpkin Pudding.*

INTRODUCTION

Hypertension remains one of the most significant public health problems in Indonesia, particularly among adults and the elderly. This condition is characterized by persistently elevated blood pressure and is a major risk factor for various cardiovascular diseases, such as stroke, coronary heart disease, and kidney failure. Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health shows that the prevalence of hypertension in Indonesia has reached 34.1%, with a tendency to increase with age and changes in lifestyle (Ministry of Health, 2023). This high figure indicates that hypertension remains a serious challenge in efforts to improve public health.

One of the main factors contributing to the high prevalence of hypertension is an unbalanced diet, particularly a high-salt, low-fiber diet, and a low intake of natural foods rich in micronutrients. These consumption patterns are exacerbated by low public awareness of the importance of dietary management as part of blood pressure control efforts. Various studies have shown that non-pharmacological interventions, particularly through improved dietary habits, can have a significant impact on lowering blood pressure and preventing long-term complications from hypertension (Whelton et al., 2018).

In several areas, including RT 10, Jembatan Kecil Village, challenges remain in implementing a healthy lifestyle, which plays a crucial role in controlling hypertension. Field observations indicate that some residents do not fully understand the importance of dietary

management, particularly limiting salt intake and choosing healthier foods. Daily consumption patterns are still dominated by processed and instant foods, while the utilization of nutritious local foods, such as pumpkin, has not been optimally utilized. This situation reflects low nutritional literacy and limited community skills in processing food into healthy menus that support blood pressure control. Consistent with findings in other areas, these unbalanced dietary habits contribute to an increased risk of hypertension, despite medical treatment efforts (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023; Whelton et al., 2018).

Pumpkin (*Cucurbita moschata*) is a local food with the potential to support hypertension control. The fiber, potassium, beta-carotene, and antioxidant compounds in pumpkin play a role in helping maintain blood pressure balance, improve blood vessel health, and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease (Astawan & Kasih, 2019). Besides its high nutritional value, pumpkin is also readily available, relatively inexpensive, and can be processed into various food products, including pudding, which is practical and readily accepted by various age groups.

However, the use of pumpkin as part of a healthy diet is still not optimal in the community. Limited knowledge about its nutritional benefits and a lack of skills in food processing are major inhibiting factors. Therefore, educational efforts are needed that are not only informative but also practical, so that the community can implement a healthy diet sustainably in their daily lives.

Based on these conditions, a community service activity was carried out in RT 10, Jembatan Kecil Village, as an effort to increase residents' understanding and skills in managing hypertension through the adoption of healthier consumption patterns. This activity was based on the belief that simple changes in daily habits can have a significant impact on health. Therefore, the use of local foods such as pumpkin was introduced as a healthy snack alternative that is easy to prepare and has the potential to help control blood pressure.

RESEARCH METHODS

The initial phase of the activity began with data collection through direct observation and informal communication with local residents. This process aimed to identify consumption habits, the community's level of knowledge regarding hypertension, and daily food processing patterns. Observations indicated that the majority of the community still relied on foods high in salt and low in fiber and had not yet optimally utilized local food sources as part of a healthy diet.

Based on these findings, educational activities were planned, focusing on improving the community's understanding and practical skills. The material was presented in the form of a short counseling session accompanied by a demonstration of making pumpkin pudding as a healthy snack alternative for people with hypertension. The media used included fresh ingredients, simple cooking equipment, and printed media in the form of educational leaflets. The activities were conducted interactively through material delivery, live demonstrations, and open discussions. Participants were encouraged to actively participate in each stage of the activity to gain hands-on experience in healthy food processing. This approach aimed to enhance conceptual understanding as well as practical skills that could be applied in everyday life. Evaluation was conducted through direct observation of participant participation, reflective discussions, and questions and answers to assess the level of understanding and readiness of participants to implement a healthy diet. The evaluation results indicated an increase in community knowledge and awareness regarding the importance of controlling hypertension through managing consumption patterns. These findings form the basis for developing recommendations for the development of sustainable health education programs at the community level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Activity Results

A community outreach activity on the use of pumpkin pudding as a healthy snack alternative for people with hypertension was conducted with the involvement of the community in RT 10, Jembatan Kecil Village. This activity received a positive response, especially from housewives who play a direct role in providing family meals. The material presented focused on a basic understanding of hypertension, its risk factors, and the role of a healthy diet in controlling blood pressure.

In the initial session, participants were given an explanation of hypertension, the dangers it can cause if left uncontrolled, and the importance of reducing salt intake in daily meals. This explanation helped participants understand that hypertension control depends not only on medication but also on sustainable dietary changes. Many participants expressed that they had not previously understood the relationship between consuming high-salt foods and increased blood pressure.

The main session of the activity consisted of a demonstration of making pumpkin pudding as a healthy snack alternative. The facilitator demonstrated the process, from steaming the pumpkin, pureeing the ingredients, mixing it with agar-agar and low-fat milk, and finally, molding. This demonstration provided participants with visual and hands-on experience, making it easier for them to understand the steps for preparing simple, healthy food that can be done at home.

Throughout the activity, participants showed great enthusiasm, especially when tasting the pumpkin pudding. Many participants stated that the pudding tasted delicious, was easy to make, and could be a healthier snack alternative to commonly consumed foods high in sugar and salt. This demonstrates that simple food innovations can increase public interest in adopting healthier eating habits.

In addition to the demonstration, participants were also given an explanation of consumption guidelines, including the recommendation to consume pumpkin pudding two to three times per week as part of a balanced diet. Emphasis was placed on the importance of combining healthy snack consumption with reduced salt intake and other healthy lifestyle habits, such as light physical activity and regular blood pressure checks.



Figure 1. Demonstration of Pumpkin Pudding Preparation and Distribution to Community Members during the Health Education Activity



Figure 2. Educational Poster on the Benefits and Proper Processing of Pumpkin for Hypertension Management

Problem Solving

The results of the activity in RT 10, Jembatan Kecil Village, showed that hypertension control efforts still face various obstacles, particularly those related to people's daily consumption habits. Many residents are not fully aware of the crucial role of dietary management in controlling blood pressure, so hypertension management often focuses solely on medication. A lack of understanding of the impact of excessive salt consumption and limited knowledge about healthy food alternatives leads to the persistence of unbalanced diets. This situation emphasizes that hypertension management cannot be achieved solely through a medical approach; it requires ongoing education to foster healthier and more sustainable eating habits.

Through an educational and demonstrative approach, this activity provided a practical solution by introducing pumpkin pudding as an easy-to-make, affordable, and nutritious snack alternative. The use of local ingredients also made it easier for the community to implement this practice sustainably without relying on processed, manufactured products.

Furthermore, this activity helped shift participants' mindsets to the idea that hypertension control does not always require expensive or complicated interventions. Simple changes, such as replacing high-salt snacks with pumpkin-based products, can make a significant contribution to blood pressure control. Participants also demonstrated a readiness to apply the knowledge gained and share it with other family members.

Overall, this outreach activity successfully improved community knowledge, attitudes, and preparedness in managing hypertension through a healthy local food approach. These findings confirm that practice-based education and the use of local food ingredients are effective strategies in supporting community-level non-communicable disease promotion and prevention efforts.

CONCLUSION

This community service activity demonstrated that nutrition education based on the use of local foods is a practical, affordable, and effective approach to supporting hypertension control in RT 10, Jembatan Kecil Village. Through outreach activities and demonstrations of pumpkin pudding making, the community gained an understanding that choosing healthy, low-salt, and nutritious snacks can play a vital role in maintaining stable blood pressure. This activity also increased participants' awareness, skills, and commitment to implementing a healthy diet sustainably. With its simple yet applicable approach, this program has the potential to positively impact hypertension prevention and control efforts at the community level.

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