

The health communication for the acceleration of stunting reduction in Garut regency

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ABSTRACT

Background: The stunting prevalence rate is still a significant concern that must be resolved in Indonesia, especially in West Java. The latest data obtained from SSGI (2022) states that out of 27 districts/cities in West Java, four districts/cities have a high stunting prevalence (30%-39.9%) which are Garut Regency, Cianjur Regency, Bandung Regency, and Cirebon City. Garut is in the public spotlight because it has the highest stunting prevalence in West Java. **Purpose:** Therefore, referring to these data, researchers are interested in knowing the health communication polemic in responding to Garut Regency's acceleration of reducing stunting prevalence. **Method:** The research approach used is qualitative research with a case study method. In Garut, stunting is a critical issue and is still being worked on. This study used in-depth interviews to collect data from five informants, participatory observation, and a literature study. **Results:** The results of the study showed exciting findings, including First, the existence of social, cultural, and economic factors as the cause of the health communication polemic in the acceleration of reducing Garut Regency's stunting prevalence; Secondly, the health communication process has been conducted to accelerate a stunting reduction in Garut Regency; and thirdly, the need for health communication planning evaluation for accelerating stunting reduction so that even this has become a polemic until now. **Conclusion:** The health communication program planning evaluation carried out should be able to determine the next steps that must be taken so that this health communication polemic can be resolved immediately. **Implications:** The findings from this research have implications for the development of the next accelerated stunting reduction program, especially in Garut. The existence of an evaluation of the communication program is an important note that can be considered to realize the achievement of Indonesia Emas 2024.

Keywords: Polemic; health communication; acceleration; reducing; stunting prevalence

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INTRODUCTION

Stunting is a word that continuously grabs the Indonesian government's attention and is endlessly discussed. This health communication polemic is fascinating to be studied in-depth because it is the goal of Indonesia Emas 2045. In this article, the authors are interested to know the health communication polemic in response to the acceleration of Garut Regency's stunting prevalence reduction.

As reported in mass media, the productive Indonesian young generation is the principal capital to reach Indonesia Emas in 2045. Therefore, stunting must be immediately prevented and overcome to create this generation (Kompas, 2022). The news quote confirms this study's urgency, especially in high stunting prevalence areas. The authors found it interesting, so exploring the health communication pattern in Garut Regency is necessary to reduce stunting prevalence further.

In Indonesia, the stunting prevalence is still a significant concern that needs to be resolved. This evidence can be seen through the Ministry of Health's program to alleviate stunting, one of which is "West Java Zero Stunting." SSGI's latest (2022) conveys that among 27 regencies/cities in West Java, four regencies/cities have a high stunting prevalence rate (30%-39.9%), which are Garut Regency, Cianjur Regency, Bandung Regency, and Cirebon City. Garut is in the public spotlight because it has the highest stunting prevalence in West Java at 43 percent. Therefore, referring to these data, researchers are interested in knowing the health

communication polemic in responding to Garut Regency's acceleration of reducing stunting prevalence.

Jauhar, M., Indanah, I., Kartikasari, F., Rachmawati, U., & Faridah, U. (2022) have conducted previous research on stunting from the health cadres' capacity point of view. According to them, this persistent phenomenon can lead to a decline in some future generations' quality aspects. Community-based activities are one of the alternative solutions to handling stunting. Health cadres, as part of the community, as well as part of the health workers, are expected to have the capacity to carry out early detection and handle toddlers' stunting. Increasing the health cadres' capacity is essential, which can be done through regular coaching. Their research was conducted in the Undaan and Dawe Health Centers area, Kudus Regency, in October-November 2021. By analyzing the data using the Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney tests, it was found that increasing health cadres' skills also increased the early detection of community-based stunting knowledge with $p\text{-value} = 0.001$ ($p < 0.05$). Other training programs are recommended to increase the health cadres' knowledge in finding new stunting cases in the community while integrating them with children's health service programs in primary health facilities (Jauhar, M., Indanah, I., Kartikasari, F., Rachmawati, U., & Faridah, 2022).

The research provides data on the importance of stunting prevention that must be carried out in Indonesia. However, the authors

raised a different phenomenon accelerating the prevalence of stunting prevention in the Garut Regency, as the numbers are still high. Garut is also the main target of “West Java Zero Stunting,” a stunting alleviation program in West Java.

The Health Department (2022) also emphasized West Java Zero Stunting 2023 program through its website. West Java Zero New Stunting is West Java Governor’s flagship program to support national stunting prevalence reduction programs. The target is that the prevalence can be reduced to 19.2% in 2023 (Dinkes, 2022).

Wulandari, R. A., Utari, P., & Hastjarjo, S. (2022), who also examined stunting, supported the research urgency. However, they discussed a stunting prevalence reduction program in Brebes. According to them, that is Central Java Provincial Government’s priority program. Brebes is even included in Indonesia’s top 10 cities with the highest stunting cases. The study focuses on seeing how people in poverty pay attention to their health, especially stunting, to build health awareness as the goal of an effective communication process. The results showed that they still lack health awareness. The implementation of Brebes’s stunting prevention program has not shown maximum results. Although many activities support the program, the stunting rate has remained relatively high (Wulandari, R. A., Utari, P., & Hastjarjo, 2022).

Another similar study supporting the author’s data was conducted in Tanzania. Moffat, R., Sayer, A., DeCook, K., Cornia, A., Linehan,

M., Torres, S., & West, J (2022) mentioned that children’s stunting is a significant problem in Tanzania, affecting about 2.7 million children under the age of five. This study aimed to examine the factors associated with mass media components exposure (radio and television) and interpersonal communication integrated with a national communication campaign aimed at reducing stunting. The communication component is the focus of the current study. While the impact of communication campaigns on health behaviors in rural has been studied, the factors associated with exposure to communication campaigns in rural Tanzania are primarily unknown (Moffat, R., Sayer, A., DeCook, K., Cornia, A., Linehan, M., Torres, S., & West, 2022).

Stunting is a significant problem that must be resolved immediately in Indonesia and the world. It is shown through the research of Moffat et al. (2022), which discusses the alleviation of stunting in Tanzania, where the factors that cause stunting are still being studied, especially in several rural areas. Other countries also appear to have a similar program. Therefore, these data support the authors to research the health communication polemic in stunting prevalence reduction acceleration in Garut Regency, Indonesia.

Another study discussing stunting was carried out by Scheffler, C., & Hermanussen, M. (2022). Stunting is often observed in the poor and the affluent, well-nourished social strata of the past 10,000 years. Only recently, and only in a few democratic modern societies,

has the status risen beyond the average of the long-lasting historical heights. Taking an evolutionary perspective and considering the effects of society on growth, competitive growth, and strategic growth adjustment, stunting appears to be natural in terms of human height (Scheffler, C., & Hermanussen, 2022). The findings presented by Scheffler et al (2022) provided another perspective on stunting, considered natural in humans, viewed from the effect of people’s attitudes.

Referring to previous literature, the authors have become more interested in researching health communication polemic in response to the stunting prevalence reduction acceleration in the Garut regency. The regency’s high stunting prevalence is the main reason for carrying out this research. This health communication polemic needs more exploration so that the main problems can be known further.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a case study method, taking a qualitative data approach through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. As stated by Creswell, a case study is a research method that can dismantle a unique social phenomenon (Creswell, J. W., & Poth, 2016). In this study, the researchers explain the health communication polemic in responding to Garut Regency’s acceleration of reducing stunting prevalence.

The data was collected through participatory observations, in-depth interviews, and a literature study. Five people became

Table 1 Research Informant Data

No.	Informant’s Identity	Information
1	Ma	Health workers at Puskesmas Garut
2	Ib	Health workers at Dinas Kesehatan Garut
3	Mn	The health cadres’ head in Garut Regency
4	En	Stunted child’s mother in Garut Regency
5	Sd	Stunted child’s mother in Garut Regency

Source: Research Results, 2021

research informants, with their full names disguised, following the research code of ethics. The authors used purposive sampling as an informant retrieval technique in this study. This technique is used by choosing informants based on the researcher’s research criteria. The informants are as follows in Table 1.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the COVID-19 pandemic, various mass media reports show an outbreak of efforts to handle stunting. One of them is the report found on mediaindonesia.com. It was about Tanoto Foundation, which is often discussed by the media for its involvement in handling stunting in Indonesia

The figure 1 was obtained from mediaindonesia.com, which shows the contribution of Tanoto Foundation in accelerating stunting reduction in Indonesia. The webinar activity was conducted online to discuss the collaboration between Tanoto



Source : mediaindonesia.com, August 2022
Figure 1 Mediaindonesia.com news about Tanoto Foundation's role

Foundation and the Ministry of Social Affairs to strengthen stunting reduction interventions. Other forms of contribution include preparing human resources in the context of behavioral change, primarily through Family Development Session (FDS) programs or Family Capacity Building (Mediaindonesia, 2022).

Previously, Halidi (2020) also mentioned Tanoto Foundation's involvement as an independent philanthropic institution engaged in education. Widodo said that it has a mission so that all children can achieve maximum learning potential based on their developmental stage, and are ready for school. Includes reducing stunting, improving the quality of care for children aged 0-3 years, and increasing access and quality of early childhood development services (Halidi, 2020).

In addition, the authors also found the consistency of Tanoto Foundation's involvement in stunting alleviation programs in Indonesia. Yuliadi revealed that the success of reducing stunting depends on how families can optimally take care of their children (Yuliadi,



Source : menara62.com, 2021
Figure 2 Tanoto Foundation is holding a Webinar on the Role of Parents in Accelerating Stunting Reduction in Indonesia

2021). Children are in a vulnerable position of wanting or not wanting to be stunted, so those in their environment are the determinants; in this case, the closest environment is the family," Dr. Hasto explained while opening the "Good Practices for Efforts to Accelerate Stunting Reduction: Becoming a Great Parent through Behavior Change in Support of accelerating stunting reduction" webinar. Hasto said that the challenge now about how people need it is that stunting is essential and must be overcome (Yuliadi, 2021).

Figure 2 also shows Tanoto Foundation's participation in accelerating stunting reduction through the role of parents. In this case, the authors see that the webinar aimed to inform parents of their role in accelerating stunting reduction through behavioral changes.

Referring to various reports regarding Tanoto Foundation's participation as an independent philanthropic institution engaging in education, the author's findings in this study can complement questions about the health communication polemic in responding to Garut

Regency's acceleration of reducing stunting prevalence. Given the intensive participation of Tanoto Foundation in collaborating with various relevant government agencies, why is the stunting prevalence still high? Moreover, the existing data through various reports show the synergy between Tanoto Foundation and government agencies during the pandemic in 2020, 2021, and even today, 2022.

It amplifies the author's research findings and shows the natural phenomenon of stunting. The health communication was polemic in response to Garut Regency's acceleration of reducing stunting prevalence, revealing an exciting finding, which has been described below.

The results of the study showed exciting findings, including the existence of social, cultural, and economic factors as the cause of the health communication polemic in the acceleration of reducing Garut Regency's stunting prevalence; the health communication process has been conducted to accelerate a stunting reduction in Garut Regency; and the need for health communication planning evaluation for the stunting reduction acceleration so that even this has become a polemic until now. Analysis of Social, Cultural, and Economic Factors as the Cause of the Health Communication Polemic.

The stunting phenomenon seems not to be over until now. The government has made various efforts through various agencies or in collaboration with other private institutions. One of them can be seen in Garut Regency, the

research location. While there are increasingly aggressive accelerating stunting reduction government programs, the reality is that stunting rates are still high, especially post-pandemic. Was supported by data gained from several mass media regarding stunting alleviation programs. That is why it can be called the health communication polemic in Indonesia, which also happens in Garut Regency. Stunting still needs to be resolved, even though the government's efforts have been intensively socialized through various mass media platforms. Therefore, the authors seek answers to the research questions in this case. The first finding proves this by analyzing social, cultural, and economic factors that cause the health communication polemic in responding to the stunting prevalence reduction in Garut Regency.

One of the supporting data obtained by the authors is about the stunting alleviation program in Garut in 2021, as revealed by Hanapi (Hanapi, 2021). He explained that the collaboration programs and activities of SKPD (Regional Apparatus Work Unit) in Garut Regency in handling stunting still need to be integrated. The Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Garut Regency launched an innovation named Program Penanganan Garut Zero Stunting Berbasis Kolaborasi Jejaring Kerja (GANTENG BEKERJA). "Ganteng Bekerja" (which translates as handsome while working) is a program expected to answer problems related to handling stunting in Garut Regency. However, the lack of optimal collaboration and integration of the stakeholders' activities is a

Table 2 Causes of Health Communication Polemics in accelerating stunting reduction in Garut Regency

No.	Factors	Informant	Interview Excerpts
1	Social Factors Analysis	Health workers in Garut Regency (MA, IB)	<p>“The issue of stunting is a taboo to discuss in the family. So I [the family members] do not want [anybody] to say that, for example, the son is indicated to be stunted. Then, if it is mentioned in the RT/RW level, it is not acceptable that occurs, but rejection.” (Ma interview results, 2021)</p> <p>“Some people do not realize the importance of preventing stunting or do not accept that their children are stunted. Another thing that comes up is not wanting to say that the child is short because of stunting.” (IB interview results, 2021)</p>
2	Cultural Factors Analysis	The head of the health kader in one of the villages in Garut Regency	<p>“People think that their children are not stunted, but because it is inherited. I [was short], or it was inherited through my husband. Later on, it is not going to be, [it is going to be normal]. So there is a presumption it is an ordinary thing.” (MN interview results, 2021)</p>
3	Economic Factors Analysis	Mothers with children who are indicated to be stunted (EN &SD)	<p>“Well, I just eat what’s available; sometimes, the child only eats what’s available at home; bala-bala is enough. Moreover, when there is meat and fish, it is expensive, and the economic factor does not support it. (EN interview results, 2021)</p> <p>“My husband does not have a stable job. So, [we just] eat what is available, alhamdulillah, we get milk from the health cadres’ head. I don’t have a house yet, and we still live in our relative’s house. (SD interview results, 2021)</p>

Source: Research Results, 2021

problem that hinders the acceleration of stunting handling in the Garut Regency (Hanapi, 2021).

In addition, the author has also explained in the introduction about the West Java program with “Jabar Zero Stunting 2023” as its tagline. In association with the “Ganteng Bekerja” program, it is the government’s effort to make the program successful in decreasing the stunting prevalence rates. However, this is still a polemic; in this case, the author sees a polemic of health communication because this phenomenon is also seen in the reality that occurs in the field. Hanapi highlighted in his

article that the collaboration and integration of the program have yet to be optimal in all agencies or stakeholders (Hanapi, 2021).

Referring to these data, the author found, through this study, to find out the causes of this health communication polemic in response to the stunting reduction acceleration in the Garut regency (Table 2).

In the table above, the author describes an interview excerpt that strengthens the factors causing health communication polemics in responding to the stunting prevalence reduction acceleration in Garut Regency. Based on the

interviews and observations results, the authors found three factors: the analysis of social, cultural, and economic factors.

Social Factors can be seen through the unhealthy diet or lifestyle of the people. In addition, the stunting issue is considered taboo to discuss because people feel they do not belong to the “stunted category.” Another supporting social factor is improper parenting by families with children indicated to be stunted.

Cultural Factors can be seen in the assumption that being short is a genetic factor inherited by the mother or father, so it becomes ordinary. Having a short body is not a significant problem because it does not impact health, which is justified by the rest of the family.

Economic Factors can be seen in the interview excerpts, which reveal the unstable economic condition of the family. They do not have a fixed income, and their husbands do not have a stable jobs, so they cannot afford to implement a healthy lifestyle with nutritious food. There is an assumption that nutritious food requires large or expensive funds.

These findings have also been supported by several previous studies obtained earlier. Annisa said that stunting is a chronic nutritional problem causing growth and development disorders in children under five (Annisa, & Sulistyaningsih, 2022). Family empowerment efforts can be one of the effective ways to help the government reduce stunting cases. The study aims to examine family empowerment to reduce stunting in toddlers. Based on the article searched, among 1,493 selected articles, ten articles are relevant

to the inclusion criteria. The study revealed two main aspects, socio-demographic and child parenting. Mother decision-making in the household, education, and environment is essential for family empowerment. It is expected that the mothers will be able to make changes by increasing maternal knowledge and skills in child nutritional intake to reduce stunting. However, further studies on socioeconomics, food intake practices, and food variations are critical because they are indicators of meeting children’s nutritional intake, a supporting factor for reducing toddler stunting cases (Annisa & Sulistyaningsih, 2022).

Annisa concealed the socio-demographic factors and child parenting patterns that are the causes of growth and development disorders in children under five (Annisa, 2022). Therefore, efforts are needed to empower the family. Is relevant to the author’s findings. The social, cultural, and economic factors discovered in this research enriched previous research, especially regarding social and cultural factors diffused in the Garut Regency. It is also the cause of the “stunting phenomenon as a health communication polemic” that still exists.

In addition, other studies conducted by Aminin, F., Damayanti, M., Saputri, N. A. S., & Darwitri, D (2022) also support the findings of this study. Aminin et al (2022) revealed that in 2015 malnutrition or stunting was an underlying factor in about 45% of the 5.9 million children who died under five. Referring to the impact, knowing the factors that caused stunting is essential. The study

aims to determine the determinants of stunting. Based on the identification and 14 articles, it can be concluded that the determinants of stunting are consistently socioeconomic status (family income), infectious diseases, maternal education, exclusive breastfeeding, low birth weight babies, premature birth, inclusive breast milk, length of delivery, macro and micro deficiency factors, water and environmental sanitation, society, and social factors. It is expected that there will be government programs that can support stunting prevention by considering stunting determinants (Aminin, F., Damayanti, M., Saputri, N. A. S., & Darwitri, 2022).

Referring to Aminin et al (2022), the authors found three main factors contributing to the health communication polemic in response to accelerating stunting prevalence reduction in Garut Regency. However, Aminin et al (2022) revealed that government stunting prevention programs can overcome the determinants of stunting causes. In reality, the author also found data that the collaboration and integration of stunting reduction acceleration activity programs from all stakeholders in the district were not optimal. Therefore, the authors further explore why it still becomes a health communication polemic.

The Ongoing Health Communication Process Conducted to Accelerate Stunting Prevalence Reduction in Garut Regency. The second finding in this study is the ongoing health communication process accelerating the stunting prevalence reduction in Garut

Regency. In this case, the author breaks down the health communication components: health communicators, health messages, health media, and these health targets/ goals.

About these findings, previous research conducted by Adriany, V., & Tesar, M. (2022) revealed the discourse of stunting in Indonesia and its relation to early childhood education. Stunting was analyzed through Foucault's work, with data from long-term ethnographic studies and analysis of relevant policy documents in Indonesia. They argued that the discourse of stunting governed children, teachers, and parents by acting as a form of biopower to regulate rationality. Focusing only on individual and nutritional aspects, the discourse ignores more significant social problems. Children, teachers, and parents are a core unit in such spaces (Adriany & Tesar, 2022). This data supports the findings of this study. Although the stunting factors differ from the findings in this study, the results have shown a link between stunting and early childhood education that children should have obtained.

In reality, the author finds every component of the ongoing health communication to accelerate the stunting prevalence reduction in Garut Regency. It is obtained through interviews, literature studies, and observations outlined in Table 3.

Based on the findings above, Garut Regency's government, in particular, has tried to respond to the acceleration of stunting prevalence reduction rates. One of the efforts is responding to mass media reports about the

Table 3 Health Communication Process in Accelerating Stunting Reduction in Garut Regency

No	Health Communication Components	research findings
1	Health communicator	Garut Regency's Mayor and Vice Mayor, Dinas Kesehatan, Vice of BKKBN, public figure, health sector, and cadre in Garut Regency
2	Health messages	The government must synergize with all parties (other local government agencies, health workers, communities, teachers, health cadres, and students) in order to accelerate the stunting prevalence reduction.
3	Health media	Online media, social media, print media in the form of banners and posters in several areas and Puskemas in Garut
4	Health targets	All levels of society consisting of parents, families with children indicated as stunted, adolescents, and children

Source: Research Results, 2021

regency's stunting emergencies. The findings also prove that the health communicators involved are stakeholders or the regency's government agencies, including health workers and cadres, who play a role in reducing the stunting prevalence rates. However, it is also adjusted to the needs or programs previously designed.

In this case, Susanti (2022) explained that the Garut Regency's stunting prevalence reached 35.2 %, the highest in West Java, putting itself in the red states. "West Java Province deserves to set a vigilance alarm for stunting issues," Hasto Wardoyo, the Head of the Acceleration of National Stunting Reduction Implementation Team, conveyed through a Zoom meeting. This interview excerpt is part of the health message component delivered by stakeholder officials at Garut Regency (Susanti, 2022).

In the communication process, the mothers were found to be the audience or the health

message target. Previous research conducted by Laksono, A. D., Sukoco, N. E. W., Rachmawati, T., & Wulandari, R. D (2022) also concluded that all the variables tested were related to the stunted toddlers with working mothers in Indonesia. The residence type, the mother's education level, and the toddler's age affected the severely stunted toddlers with working mothers in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the residence, mother's age group, marital status, mother's level of education, and the toddler's age are related to severe stunting toddlers with working mothers in Indonesia. Previous research found that stunting in toddlers is closely related to maternal characteristics. Working mothers are vulnerable groups having stunted toddlers. This study analyzes the factors related to stunted toddlers with working mothers in Indonesia. A married mother is 0.734 (95% CI 0.617-0.872) times less likely to have a severely stunted toddler than a divorced woman or widower.

Higher quality of education protects working mothers who have stunted toddlers. The study concluded that there were five variables related to stunted toddlers with working mothers in Indonesia: a place of residence, age, marital status, education, and toddlers' age (Laksono, Sukoco, Rachmawati & Wulandari, 2022).

Supports these research findings, especially about the health communication process carried out. Working mothers become a vulnerable group with stunted toddlers because the mother will entrust her child to her family, parents, or other family members. This leads to inadequate parenting, especially in healthy nutrition intake required for children to grow up well. This fact was also justified by the research informants, one of whom was the head of the health cadres, MN:

“If the mother is working, the child is taken care of by the grandmother or aunt or other family members. On average, the mother works in a factory or shop like a supermarket, so she doesn't pay attention to the diet... let alone the parenting style...” (MN Interview, 2021)

In addition to the interview excerpts above, the health message is an essential component that must be considered, supported by previous research conducted by Gebreayohanes, M., & Dessie, A. (2022). They revealed that the stunting rate in pastoral communities is relatively high among children aged 6-59 months. However, the study was not conducted in Garut, the study aimed to determine the stunting prevalence correlation in pastoral community children. The study found that stunting was associated with

several nutritional and non-nutritional factors. To overcome it, cross-sectoral cooperation is needed by increasing clean water provision for the community, optimal breastfeeding practices, food diversity, and economic status (Gebreayohanes & Dessie, 2022).

Interestingly, the authors' study findings also revealed the need for cross-sectoral cooperation. It is in terms of increasing the provision of clean water (sanitation), breastfeeding practices, balanced nutrition, and economic factors. This finding can be categorized as a health message that supports accelerating the stunting prevention reduction rates in Garut Regency.

Evaluation of Health Communication Program Planning to Accelerate Stunting Reduction The third finding is the need to evaluate health communication programs of the planning process in accelerating stunting prevalence reduction rates in the Garut Regency. The health communication program planning evaluation is critical to be carried out sustainably so that it can be followed up immediately.

Stunting certainly cannot be allowed to occur continuously. Therefore, the authors seek to elaborate on this further. This means that when the health communication process to prevent stunting is carried out, it must be followed up by a program evaluation.

In this case, the authors elaborated on the health communication programs planning evaluation to accelerate the stunting prevalence reduction in Garut Regency (Table 4).

The above findings suggested that the

Table 4 Evaluation of Health Communication Program Planning for Accelerating Stunting Reduction in Garut Regency

No	Evaluation Results
1	The low public awareness of preventing stunting is accompanied by indifference in Garut Regency. Became a polemic of health communication.
2	Environmental aspects do not support the community to implement a healthy lifestyle, especially for families with stunted children. For example, incomplete sanitation, difficulty in obtaining clean water, and other aspects.
3	The cultural perception is that being short is genetic or hereditary, so it becomes ordinary.
4	One's perception is that living healthy and nutritious is expensive. In addition, economic factors make people unable to live a healthy life to prevent stunting.
5	Involvement of every stakeholder, health worker, cadre, or others in conveying the mission to reduce stunting rates. In this case, the authors look at who delivers the health message, and whether it is appropriate for the audience.
6	Optimization of the communication media used in the programs. The media needs to be evaluated, for instance, whether it suits the purpose and the audiences' characteristics.

Source: Research Results, 2021

evaluation must be carried out continuously. Means that when a health communication program has been conducted to accelerate stunting reduction, it is necessary to immediately evaluate it to determine whether it is successful.

Previous studies have also reinforced this research's findings. Achmad, W. (2022), who conducted stunting research in Cianjur, explained that the existence of a Family Assistance Team (TPK) is expected to be one of the efforts to accelerate stunting reduction in the Cianjur Regency. It has been established since 2020. The need for a communication strategy for community behavior change emphasizes that the community must utilize existing resources optimally. It must also be mobilized to achieve optimal results, then act quickly and appropriately. Midwives, nutritionists, and trained health workers must follow procedures to prevent stunting. Besides, cooperation and

collaboration among institutions also needs to be strengthened. It means that the efforts to overcome stunting can not only be carried out sectorally, but it requires support from other sectors and programs to run optimally and effectively in the future (Achmad 2022). Similarly, the authors' research also analyzes that cooperation and collaboration of all parties are needed to accelerate the reduction of the prevalence of stunting rates in the Garut regency.

In addition, other researchers also explained similar things about the importance of knowing the targets in stunting prevention. Saputri, also revealed that stunting is a major nutritional problem in Indonesia (Saputri et al., 2020). The prevalence of stunted toddlers in Indonesia was 30.8% in 2018, equivalent to around 7 million Indonesian toddlers. The study results show that women are strategically preventing stunting, either productively, reproductively, or

socially. However, women need strong access and control to play that role optimally. Policies, economic, social, cultural, and legal support are urgently needed by women, for both mothers and mothers-to-be. Therefore, affirmative policies are needed to support women's access and control to reduce stunting rates (Saputri et al., 2020).

This is in line with the findings of this study. The authors view that Garut Regency's program to accelerate stunting prevalence reduction has now reached out to women, both mothers and mothers-to-be. Giving tablets to add blood to high-school girls is a tangible manifestation of stunting reduction efforts that have been carried out in the Garut Regency. This data was obtained from the interview and observation results from MN, one of Garut Regency's Puskesmas health workers. However, the author also sees the importance of evaluating an ongoing program to know which component needs to be improved. Is it the health communicator, the health messages, or the health media? This evaluation must be carried out continuously instead of only being conducted at a certain time.

Hadi, also emphasized the importance of conducting the health communication program planning process (Hadi et al., 2022). They said that primary school-aged children are a vulnerable group regarding nutrition. These children are also prone to malnutrition if they are exposed to insufficient food as well as macro- and micronutrient intake and infectious diseases. The study aims to analyze families' socio-culture about stunted students.

He concluded that the family's socio-cultural determinants are factors for primary school-aged stunted children. Students and the school can monitor the nutritional status of students through anthropometric measurements frequently carried out every month (Hadi et al., 2022).

Thus, referring to the previous research above, the authors are convinced that the health communication program planning evaluation is mandatory to accelerate the stunting prevalence reduction rates in Kabupaten Garut. The monitoring process should not only be for mothers or future mothers but also primary school-aged children and their schools. The health communication program planning evaluation carried out should be able to determine the next steps that must be taken so that this health communication polemic can be resolved immediately.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted, the authors found: the existence of social, cultural, and economic factors as the cause of the health communication polemic in the acceleration of reducing Garut Regency's stunting prevalence; the health communication process has been conducted to accelerate a stunting reduction in Garut Regency; and the need for continuous health communication planning evaluation for accelerating stunting reduction so that this polemic can be resolved immediately.

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