

Stakeholders' views on nutrition in-school programs in Indonesia to alleviate anaemia in adolescent girls

Abstract

Background: Anaemia remains a public health problem in Indonesia. In 2016, the Indonesian government started an iron supplementation program at schools to alleviate anaemia in adolescent girls. However, based on the Indonesian Basic Health Survey 2018, only a few female students properly consumed the supplements as recommended. This qualitative study aimed to explore stakeholders' views on facilitators and barriers to the implementation of this iron supplementation program in schools.

Method: Stakeholders were purposively selected as participants representing female students, parents, and teachers from two contrasting schools (urban and rural) and government officials. Semi-structured in-depth interviews using interview guides were conducted and collected data were analysed thematically. The research's ethical approval was granted by BSREC (Ref:103/22-23). The permission to conduct the research was authorised by the local government.

Results: Twenty-seven stakeholders (18 students, 3 parents/guardians, 2 teachers, and 4 government officials) participated in this study. Six main themes emerged: *students' health; program efficiency; personal choice; supplement form; more stakeholders; and health education*. The awareness of the positive impact on health from the program, direct monitoring in taking the supplementation, and parents and peer group support were identified as facilitators for the sustainability of iron supplementation program at schools. Meanwhile, uncomfortable feelings about the program, unpleasant forms of intervention, unintegrated programs, incompetency issues, and inadequate nutrition education were perceived as barriers.

Conclusion: Understanding the facilitators and barriers to the implementation of the iron supplementation program in schools may contribute to changes in policy and program plans to improve adolescents' nutrition and health in Indonesia in the future.

Keywords: Anaemia, adolescents, facilitator, barrier, schools, Indonesia