



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE ABOUT FOOD, PREGNANCY MYTHS, EDUCATION AND ANXIETY IN PREGNANT WOMEN AT THE "J" HEALTH CENTER IN TANGERANG REGENCY IN 2025

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Abstract

Anxiety among pregnant women remains a common problem in antenatal care and can be influenced by various factors, both in terms of knowledge and socio-cultural aspects. Knowledge about nutrition during pregnancy, beliefs about pregnancy myths, and the mother's level of education are factors that are thought to play a role in the emergence of anxiety among pregnant women. This study aims to analyze the relationship between knowledge about food, belief in pregnancy myths, and education with anxiety in pregnant women at the "J" Community Health Center in Tangerang Regency in 2025. This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive analytical design and a cross-sectional method. Data collection was conducted in April 2025 on 67 pregnant women who visited the health center, using accidental sampling. Data were collected using a closed questionnaire and analyzed univariately and bivariately using the chi-square test. The results of the analysis showed that mothers' knowledge about food had a significant relationship with anxiety in pregnant women ($p = 0.005$). In addition, belief in pregnancy myths was also significantly related to anxiety in pregnant women ($p = 0.001$). Maternal education also showed a significant relationship with maternal anxiety ($p = 0.002$). Pregnant women with less knowledge, who still believed in pregnancy myths, and who had lower education tended to experience anxiety compared to pregnant women who had good knowledge, did not believe in pregnancy myths, and were more educated. Based on these results, it can be concluded that knowledge, belief in pregnancy myths, and education play a role in the level of anxiety experienced by pregnant women. Health education tailored to the educational background and culture of the community needs to be improved as an effort to reduce anxiety during pregnancy.

Keywords: Knowledge, Pregnancy Myths, Education, Anxiety, Pregnant Women.

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INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a biological process that has significant meaning in human life, beginning with the fertilization of an egg by sperm. Pregnancy can be experienced either willingly or unwillingly by a couple (Hasbani & Dewi, 2020). Pregnancy is influenced by various factors, one of which is belief in myths that have developed in society. Although some pregnancy myths have been scientifically explained, belief in these myths is still widespread. This situation has the potential to cause unfavorable effects, as some pregnancy myths can have a negative impact on the health of pregnant women and fetuses, as quoted from Tino (2013) in Hasbani et al. (Hasbani & Dewi, 2020)

Belief in pregnancy myths is a phenomenon that is still widely found in society. Based on research results, pregnant women tend to believe in various myths related to food restrictions and certain behaviors because they are believed to have an impact on fetal development. This belief is generally influenced by family traditions and social environment, rather than health information obtained from health workers. (firawati, 2016)

Based on research findings, during pregnancy, pregnant women are greatly influenced by the information they obtain regarding proper nutrition, cultural norms, and their level of education. Knowledge about nutritious foods during pregnancy is important to ensure the health of the mother and fetus, but is often hampered by belief in scientifically unproven food myths, which can lead to excessive worry in pregnant women. Previous studies have shown that myths about food restrictions can reduce the consumption of nutritious foods and have a negative impact on meeting the nutritional needs of pregnant women, which in turn can increase stress or anxiety related to their health and that of their fetus. (Setyoputri & Inggriani, n.d.)

In addition, the level of formal education of pregnant women has also been shown to correlate with their ability to understand nutritional information and assess the truth of myths circulating in the community. The higher a person's level of education, the more likely it is that the mother will have good nutritional knowledge and resistance to invalid information. This shows that education not only determines knowledge but also plays a role in emotional management during pregnancy. A multidimensional approach that integrates aspects of nutritional knowledge, attitudes towards food myths, and educational background needs to be explored further to understand the relationship between these three factors and the anxiety experienced by pregnant women, a psychological phenomenon that can affect quality of life and pregnancy outcomes. (Yusran et al., 2024)

One factor that influences the nutritional status of pregnant women is the culture of food

taboos and beliefs about food myths. These myths often cause pregnant women to avoid nutritious foods that are actually needed for fetal development and maternal health, thereby increasing the risk of malnutrition. Society is still steeped in cultural norms that underlie certain food taboos for pregnant women, even though most of these taboos have no scientific basis and can endanger the nutritional balance of mothers during pregnancy. (Khasanah, 2017)

Various studies show that the level of belief in food myths is related to aspects of pregnant women's health, including upper arm circumference (UAC) as an indicator of nutritional status. Findings such as these demonstrate the importance of proper understanding of nutrition and the empowerment of pregnant women through accurate education to reduce the negative impact of cultural myths on the health of mothers and fetuses. (Khasanah, 2017)

Thus, this study seeks to explain the relationship between knowledge about food, the level of belief in pregnancy myths, and educational background with the anxiety experienced by pregnant women, as part of efforts to improve maternal and perinatal health.

The problem formulation based on a preliminary study conducted at the "J" Community Health Center in Tangerang District of 20 pregnant women found that 16 women had a very low level of knowledge about pregnancy myths, so that pregnant women still believed in certain food restrictions for pregnant women, causing them to feel afraid and anxious about their pregnancy. Based on the phenomenon that occurred and the data obtained about patients entering pregnancy, the researcher was interested in determining "The Relationship Between Pregnant Women's Knowledge About Food, Beliefs in Pregnancy Myths, and Education on Pregnancy Anxiety."

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between pregnant women's knowledge about food, pregnancy myths, education, and anxiety levels at the "J" Community Health Center in Tangerang Regency

METHOD

This study is a quantitative study using a descriptive analytical design, which examines the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. This study used a cross-sectional method, which is a form of research design that involves simultaneous observation or measurement (at one time) of independent and dependent variables (Notoatmodjo, 2017). The study was conducted in April 2025 at the "J" Community Health Center in Tangerang Regency.

Sampling in this study was conducted using accidental sampling, which is a sampling

technique based on chance, whereby anyone who is considered appropriate and happens to meet the researcher can be used as a sample. The sample in this study consisted of all pregnant women who visited the health center during April 2025, totaling 67 people. In this study, a closed questionnaire was used as the instrument. Data processing was performed using the SPSS application. Data analysis was performed using univariate and bivariate analysis with the chi-square test

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results of primary data collection from questionnaires obtained in April 2025 at the "J" Community Health Center in Tangerang Regency.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Knowledge About Food, Pregnancy Myth Beliefs, and Education on Pregnant Women's Anxiety

Variable	F	
Anxiety of pregnant women	40	59.7
Anxious		
Not anxious	27	40.3
Knowledge of pregnant women	46	68.7
Insufficient		
Adequate	18	26.9
Good	3	4.5
Belief Myths		
Agree	44	65.7
Disagree	23	44.3
Mother's education		
Low (elementary school, junior high school)	45	67.2
Medium (high school)	18	26.9
High (Academy, University)	4	6.0

Table 2. Relationship between knowledge about food, beliefs about pregnancy myths, and education on the anxiety of pregnant women

Variable	Anxiety of Pregnant Women				Total		P Value
	Anxious		Not Anxious		N	%	
Knowledge of pregnant women							
Insufficient	33	71.7	13	28.3	46	100	0.005
Sufficient	7	38.9	11	61.1	18	100	
Good	0	0	3	100	3	100	
Belief myths							
Agree	33	75	11	25	44	100	0.001
Disagree	7	30.4	16	69.6	23	100	
Mother's education							
Low	33	73.3	12	26.7	45	100	0.002
Middle	7	38.9	11	61.1	18	100	
Height	0	0	4	100	4	100	

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of univariate analysis, it appears that anxiety in pregnant women arises in situations where their knowledge about food is still limited, their belief in pregnancy myths is still quite strong, and their level of formal education tends to be low. These conditions indicate that the psychological experiences of mothers during pregnancy are not only influenced by biological changes but also by their ability to understand health information and the social and cultural influences of their surroundings. This description serves as the basis for further analysis of the relationship between knowledge about food, belief in pregnancy myths, and education level with anxiety in pregnant women.

The relationship between mothers' knowledge and their anxiety about food.

The results of the bivariate analysis showed a significant relationship between knowledge about food and anxiety among pregnant women (p= 0.0005). Pregnant women with less knowledge experienced more anxiety than mothers who had sufficient or good knowledge. These findings show that mothers' limited understanding of nutritional needs during pregnancy can cause uncertainty in determining food choices, which then develops into concerns about the impact on the health of the mother and fetus.

The anxiety that arises is not solely caused by pregnancy itself, but also by the mother's inability to assess whether the decisions she has made are appropriate or not. When information is limited, every food-related choice has the potential to become a source of psychological pressure for the mother. This indicates why mothers' knowledge about nutrition plays an important role not only in meeting nutritional needs but also in shaping mothers' sense of security and confidence during pregnancy.

The findings of this study support previous research showing that limited nutritional knowledge in pregnant women can affect their psychological condition, particularly in the form of worries and uncertainty related to meeting nutritional needs during pregnancy (Nurimani et al., 2022). These findings are reinforced by Rahman et al. (2016), who found that low nutritional knowledge in pregnant women is associated with increased anxiety and lack of confidence in undergoing pregnancy. Thus, knowledge about food contributes to and plays a role in maintaining the psychological well-being of pregnant women.

Belief in pregnancy myths and anxiety among pregnant women.

The analysis results show a significant relationship between belief in pregnancy myths and anxiety in pregnant women (p; 0001). Pregnant women who still believe in myths tend to experience higher anxiety. Pregnancy myths, especially those related to food restrictions or certain behaviors, often cause fear in pregnant women if they are not obeyed. Belief in myths causes pregnant women to experience pressure, especially when they receive different advice from health workers and beliefs that have developed in the community. Fear of adverse effects if the myths are violated will arise, causing anxiety, especially in mothers who have minimal health information from health workers.

Previous studies have shown that myths about food restrictions can reduce the consumption of nutritious foods and have a negative impact on meeting the nutritional needs of pregnant women, which in turn can increase

stress or anxiety related to their own health and that of their fetus (Setyoputri & Inggriani, n.d.).

Social and cultural factors in society also influence how pregnant women understand and experience pregnancy, alongside medical and biological factors. One form of this influence is the belief in pregnancy myths that have developed as part of local traditions and have been passed down from generation to generation, even though not all of them have a scientific basis (Fauziah & Si, n.d.). Based on research by Fauziah (2012) and Jatu (2013), traditional beliefs related to pregnancy are still often used as guidelines by the community in maintaining the health of mothers and fetuses, even though not all of them have a scientific basis. In some cultures, there are restrictions on certain types of food that are believed to be harmful to the fetus, even though medically these foods contain nutrients that are important for the health of the mother and the growth of the fetus. In addition, a number of traditions also restrict pregnant women from doing certain activities that actually have benefits in maintaining physical fitness and preparing for childbirth. (Widyastuti et al., 2023)

This is in line with Khasanah's (2017) research, which states that belief in pregnancy myths can affect the attitudes and emotional state of pregnant women, including the emergence of anxiety when these myths are not followed, and is related to the behavior and psychological condition of mothers during pregnancy. (firawati, 2016) This shows that cultural factors related to pregnancy myths are still an important determinant in shaping the pregnancy experience.

According to the researchers' analysis, belief in pregnancy myths is associated with increased anxiety in pregnant women because these myths create a perception of threat to the safety of the mother and fetus. Fear of negative consequences if the taboos or recommendations are not followed can cause worry and anxiety during pregnancy. In addition, social pressure from families and communities that still strongly hold traditional beliefs further reinforces pregnant women's anxiety, especially when these beliefs conflict with the recommendations of health workers.

The Relationship Between Maternal Education and Pregnant Women's Anxiety

The results of the study show a significant relationship between the mother's level of education and anxiety during pregnancy ($p = 0.002$). Mothers with a low level of education tend to experience higher anxiety compared to mothers with a medium or high level of education. Education affects a mother's ability to understand health information, assess the accuracy of information sources, and make appropriate decisions during pregnancy. Mothers with low levels of education may have difficulty filtering

the information they receive, putting them at greater risk of encountering inaccurate information and pregnancy myths, which can cause worry that ultimately turns into anxiety.

These findings are in line with research conducted by Ismaniryang, which shows that pregnant women with low levels of education are more likely to accept pregnancy myths as truth without scientific clarification, and these myths often cause excessive fear of pregnancy. (Ismaniar et al., 2020)

Higher education enables pregnant women to have a better understanding of the pregnancy process, physical and psychological changes, and the risks that may occur during pregnancy and childbirth. This adequate understanding can reduce the perception of threat and fear, thereby lowering the anxiety experienced by pregnant women. Conversely, limited education levels can lead to a lack of information and proper understanding, making pregnant women more prone to fear and worry about their pregnancy and the childbirth process. (Suyani, 2020)

Thus, the results of this study indicate that maternal education is one of the important factors related to anxiety in pregnant women. Therefore, more intensive pregnancy education tailored to the educational level of pregnant women, especially those with low education, is needed to help reduce anxiety levels during pregnancy.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that there is a significant relationship between mothers' knowledge about food, beliefs about pregnancy myths, and educational level with anxiety in pregnant women. Pregnant women with low knowledge, strong beliefs in pregnancy myths, and low educational levels experience higher levels of anxiety, indicating that maternal anxiety is influenced by the interaction of cognitive and social factors that shape how mothers respond to their pregnancy.

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