

Challenges and novel approaches to addressing slenderness and malnutrition in Indonesia.

Adhityani Putri

Faculty of Medicine, Sriwijaya University - Bukit Campus, Indonesia

"Creativity is the ability to generate novel ideas. Newness of action constitutes innovation".
Theodore Levitt

Abstract

Improved healthcare, including nutritional assistance, is associated with a higher nationwide average height, as genes, diet, and other factors all shape a population's mean height. Taller individuals generally exhibit better overall health and cognitive abilities. To raise the average height of a country, it is crucial to prioritize the at-risk population, particularly children and teenagers, as stunting, characterized by low height and severe malnutrition, can lead to cognitive deficits and potential health risks. Programs aimed at reducing stunting rates should target a more significant number of people and consider variables such as educating mothers. Indonesia has prioritized healthcare improvement and the eradication of stunting, requiring affordable supplementary meals to ensure long-term nutrient intake for the at-risk population.

Keywords: slenderness, malnutrition, supplementary meals, novel approaches, healthcare system, high risk, nutrition throughout life

Introduction and discussion

It is essential to focus on people at high risk, particularly children and adolescents who are still in the growth period if one wants to see an increase in the median height of the country as a whole. This targeting is essential because nations with a greater average height often have more substantial medical services and nutritional assistance available to their citizens. In addition, studies have proven, time and time again, that taller people have a decreased chance of health problems such as coronary artery disease and are likely to have superior cognitive ability. In the case of Indonesia, wherein the median height is below average, it is indispensable to place a high priority on the improvement of the medical system as well as providing food assistance for children and teens to boost the normal height of the whole country.

Researchers have discovered that a condition known as stunting, defined by a combination of low height and acute malnutrition, may negatively impact intellectual growth, mental health, and the future risk of acquiring chronic illnesses. As a result, comprehensive measures that target a larger population, especially children, pregnant women, and infants, are required to reduce the prevalence of stunting. Given the substantial influence of parental education on a child's growth in terms of height and weight, it is crucial to prioritize and address this matter accordingly. Even though the prevalence among infants in Indonesia is 22%, the country is still falling behind relative to other nations, highlighting the critical need to address this problem immediately. As a result, the Ministry of Healthcare in Indonesia has made eradicating retardation a top priority, and it has established a goal to decrease the prevalence of the condition to less than fifteen percent within two years.

An exhaustive, multi-sectoral strategy is required for stunting to be effectively managed. This approach must incorporate several sectors, including education, infrastructure for wastewater and sanitation, as

well as nutrition and healthcare. To support this strategy, the government has actively fostered the development of educational technologies and programs that make screening for stunting and tracking its prevalence among high-risk groups.

An essential component in combating short stature and stunting is ensuring that populations at high risk get enough nutrition throughout their lives. To address these problems, novel approaches, including ready-to-use therapy foods (RUTFs), have emerged as potential answers. One possible strategy for lowering the risk of malnutrition in children is the consumption of growing-up dairy once or twice daily by children aged one to three years. On the other hand, such therapies continue to be prohibitively expensive over the long run, which is especially problematic for high-risk populations with median or below-median incomes. As a result, there is an urgent need to create novel and inexpensive supplementary diets geared explicitly toward individuals at a high risk of retardation.

This gives a chance for Indonesia to fight stunting by developing a possibly low-cost supplemental food supply, given the country's wealth of natural resources. As an affiliate of the Healthcare Innovations Center at the Indonesia Healthcare Training and Research Institution at the Institute of Medicine at Sriwijaya University, I am fortunate to be a part of the research team conducting this crucial investigation. The program is meant to find cheaper and equally effective supplemental nutrition for vulnerable populations. As a result, the government program in Indonesia to combat stunting will be bolstered by the extra additional meal.

Conclusion

Enhancing medical and nutritional assistance and tackling problems like stunting is essential to raising the average country's height. The government plays a crucial role when it comes to offering comprehensive methods, fostering educational breakthroughs, and keeping costs down. It is essential to address dwarfism and stunting to enhance long-term health outcomes by ensuring appropriate nourishment for the vulnerable population.

REFERENCES

- Raghavan S, Huang J, Tcheandjieu C, Huffman JE, Litkowski E, Liu C, et al. A multi-population phenome-wide association study of genetically-predicted height in the Million Veteran Program. *PLoS Genet.* 2022;18(6):e1010193.
- Togas M, Gunardi H, Sekartini R, Pudjiati SR, Hogervorst E. Comparison of a set of cognitive ability screening test for primary school-aged children in Indonesia. *Med J Indones.* 2020;29(4):392–8.
- NCD Risk Factor Collaboration. HEIGHT. Evolution of height over time [Internet]. NCD Risk Factor Collaboration; 2017 [cited 2023 Apr 16]. Available from: <https://ncdrisc.org/height-mean-ranking.html>.
- Gunardi, Soedjatmiko, Sekartini R, Medise BE, Darmawan AC, Armeilia R, et al. Association between parental sociodemographic factors and declined linear growth of young children in Jakarta. *Med J Indones.* 2017;26(4):286–92.
- Publicity Department of Agency for Health Policies Development. [Two key interventions to achieve the stunting reduction target of 14% by 2024] [Internet]. Indonesian Ministry of Health: Agency for Health Policies Development; 2023 [cited 2023 Apr 16]. Available from: <https://www.badankebijakan.kemkes.go.id/dua-fokus-intervensi-penurunan-stunting-untuk-capai-target-14-di-tahun-2024/>. Indonesian.
- Sjarif DR, Yuliarti K, Iskandar WJ. Daily consumption of growing-up milk is associated with less stunting among Indonesian toddlers. *Med J Indones.* 2019;28(1):70–6.