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The effect of balanced nutrition education on nutritional behavior and microcytic anemia adolescent girls

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Female adolescents are the vulnerable group to suffer malnutrition. In Indonesia, one of the malnutrition problems suffered by many people in this group is anemia. This study aimed to assess the changes in nutritional behavior among female adolescents and microcytic anemia after getting balanced nutrition education by trained teachers. A quasi-experimental longitudinal study was conducted for three years (2015-2017) after receiving ethics approval from the Health Research Ethics Committee, Medical Faculty of Hasanuddin University (RN: UH15020073). All subjects signed informed consent after obtaining the explanation from the researcher. All school girls (n= 601) and trained teachers (n=13) from five senior high schools, divided to 4 intervention group and one control group, participated in this study. The knowledge, attitude, and practice regarding balanced nutrition were assessed using a questionnaire. The blood from subsamples (n=182) was taken through their Mediana Cubiti vein roughly three cubic centimeters (cc). The blood samples were used to assess the level of MCV and MCHC by using Flow cytometry, SLS-haemoglobin in laboratory. The teachers were trained for two days to share balanced nutrition materials for the students for ±6 months. Wilcoxon and U Mann-Whitney test was performed to analyze the changes in balanced nutrition behavior and anemia status between the intervention and control group. The score of knowledge, attitude, and practices of balanced nutrition have increased significantly in both intervention and control group ($p<0.05$). There were no significant differences on knowledge ($p=0.194$), attitude ($p=0.862$) and practice ($p=0.865$) between intervention and control groups. The incidence of microcytic anemia decreased significantly in the intervention group ($p<0.001$). Balanced nutrition education through trained teacher affects positively to the behavior of balanced nutrition and microcytic anemia on the female adolescent. Therefore, government could develop this education model should to address the malnutrition problem on this vulnerable group. We want to acknowledge the role of the teachers and girl students on their support and corporate in this research. Thanks to the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Republic Indonesia that providing funds to support all these research activities.

Keywords: balanced nutrition education, trained teacher, behavior, microcytic anemia

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