ABSTRACT

LESTARI: Education and Empowerment of PKK through Family Medicinal Plants for Dengue and Hypertension Prevention

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Background : Dengue fever and hypertension remain important public health problems that require community participation in prevention. Family medicinal plants (TOGA) offer a locally based approach, with lemongrass traditionally used to support dengue prevention and celery traditionally used to support blood pressure control. However, community members need adequate knowledge and practical skills to grow and use these plants. Members of the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) were chosen as community partners because they can share health information with families and sustain home medicinal gardens.

Objective : To improve PKK members' knowledge of dengue and hypertension prevention, to introduce lemongrass and celery as supportive family medicinal plants, and to strengthen participants' skills in growing medicinal plants independently.

Research Methods/ Implementation Methods : The LESTARI program was carried out on 22 July 2026 at the Loa Raya Village Hall with 13 PKK members. The program used a one-group pretest–posttest design. The intervention consisted of health education, distribution of educational booklets and lemongrass and celery seedlings, and hands-on planting practice. Knowledge was measured before and after the intervention and analyzed using a paired t-test.

Results : The mean knowledge score increased from 54.62 before the intervention to 81.54 afterward, a gain of 26.92 points (paired t-test: $t = -7.867$, $df = 12$, $p < 0.001$; $n = 13$). This shows a statistically significant improvement in participants' knowledge of dengue and hypertension prevention.

Conclusion/Lesson Learned : The LESTARI program improved PKK members' knowledge of dengue and hypertension prevention. Combining health education, an educational booklet, seedling distribution, and hands-on planting helped empower participants to grow lemongrass and celery at home. Limitations include the small sample ($n = 13$), the absence of a control group, and no long-term follow-up. Continued monitoring and community involvement are recommended to sustain the program.

Keyword : Community empowerment; family medicinal plants; PKK; dengue; hypertension