

Counseling on Clean and Healthy Living Behavior in Improving Public Health Levels

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ABSTRACT

This activity aims to enhance public awareness and participation in implementing Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (*Perilaku Hidup Bersih dan Sehat* or PHBS) through interactive counseling methods, education in elementary schools, and community service initiatives. Counseling is conducted through question-and-answer sessions to ensure participants' understanding, while education in elementary schools teaches proper handwashing practices as a preventive measure. Additionally, community service involves the public in maintaining environmental cleanliness. The evaluation results indicate improved public understanding of PHBS based on pretest and posttest scores. The average score of housewives increased by 11.61%, while elementary school students showed an improvement of 19.71%. This increase demonstrates that interaction-based counseling methods are more effective than one-way lectures in enhancing comprehension and behavioral change. With growing public awareness of PHBS, it is expected that healthy behaviors can be consistently practiced in daily life, contributing to a cleaner and healthier environment. This study recommends an interactive approach and hands-on practice in health education programs to enhance the effectiveness of long-term behavioral change.

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Introduction

The Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) program is designed to enhance knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that enable individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle, ultimately improving and maintaining their overall health quality [1]. Through this program, communities are expected to embrace healthier daily habits, such as washing hands with soap, consuming nutritious food, maintaining environmental cleanliness, and implementing other health-promoting behaviors. In its implementation, community empowerment plays a crucial role in ensuring the success of health promotion efforts [2]. This empowerment extends beyond merely providing information; it also focuses on enhancing the community capacity to adopt and disseminate good health practices within their surroundings.

Empowering individuals, families, and community groups is a key mission of health promotion [3]. One of the most effective methods of community empowerment is regular health education sessions conducted by medical professionals and local health cadres. These sessions aim to raise public awareness of the importance of maintaining personal health independently. By employing systematic and needs-based health education, communities can access accurate and reliable health information, particularly for those with limited access to media or healthcare facilities. Furthermore, these sessions provide a platform for community discussions, enabling participants to share experiences and seek solutions to their health concerns [4]. A participatory approach fosters a sense of involvement and responsibility among community members, encouraging them to take charge of their health and that of their environment.

Health education also plays a significant role in improving health literacy, which is essential for individuals to understand the importance of adopting healthy behaviors in daily life [5], [6]. As health literacy improves, individuals can better comprehend medical information, discern relevant content for their needs, and make informed health-related decisions. Since 1996, the government, through the Ministry of Health, has introduced the PHBS program as a national effort to enhance public health quality. However, its implementation remains suboptimal in various regions, particularly in areas with limited healthcare access. According to Cipta et al. [7], behavior based on knowledge tends to be more sustainable compared to behavior driven solely by rules or coercion. Thus, a deeper approach is necessary to ensure that communities fully understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and are motivated to adopt it consistently.

According to PHBS development guidelines, suboptimal public health status is primarily caused by three main factors: an unsupportive environment, unhealthy community behaviors, and inadequate healthcare services [8]. An unsupportive environment may include poor sanitation, limited access to clean water, and unmanaged waste. Meanwhile, unhealthy behaviors often stem from a lack of awareness or knowledge about healthy living [9]. Inadequate healthcare services may result from a shortage of medical personnel, insufficient facilities, and a lack of

continuous health education programs [10], [11]. Therefore, healthcare development must prioritize raising awareness, willingness, and the ability of individuals to lead healthy lives, ultimately fostering a society with improved health quality and self-reliance in maintaining personal well-being.

Research findings Ani et al. [12] indicate that only 38.7% of households have adopted PHBS, a figure still far from the expected target. The lack of PHBS implementation is not only observed in households but also educational institutions, workplaces, and public facilities. However, PHBS adoption in schools and workplaces plays a crucial role in creating a healthy environment and preventing disease transmission. Given this situation, more intensive interventions are required through counseling programs targeting households and educational institutions, such as elementary schools, to promote the widespread and sustainable application of PHBS [13], [14]. These efforts must be supported by policies that emphasize the importance of PHBS implementation across various sectors, along with regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure program effectiveness.

Gerbosari Village in Kulon Progo Regency has been selected as one of the target areas for this community service program. Despite having healthcare facilities such as community health centers (*Pusat Kesehatan Masyarakat* or Puskesmas), the region faces limited access to health literacy resources. Most of the population works as farmers, and the area is home to several elementary and junior high schools. These conditions make Gerbosari Village a strategic location for PHBS counseling initiatives to improve community health standards. Considering the socio-economic conditions of the local population, the PHBS counseling program must be contextually designed to ensure easy acceptance and application by the community. For instance, information delivery methods should use simpler approaches and visual media to make the material more engaging and comprehensible for all community members.

As part of this program, various counseling and guidance activities are conducted for Gerbosari Village residents to enhance their understanding of PHBS at both the household and institutional levels [15], [16]. One of the key activities involves educating elementary school students about the importance of proper handwashing as a preventive measure against infectious diseases. Additionally, community members are taught to maintain environmental cleanliness to ensure a healthy and comfortable living space. The counseling sessions employ engaging and interactive methods, such as live demonstrations, simulations, and group discussions, to encourage active participation and deeper learning. Consequently, the information conveyed becomes easier to understand and apply in daily life.

Through this PHBS counseling program, it is hoped that Gerbosari Village residents will increase their awareness and adopt healthy behaviors in their daily lives. Furthermore, the program aims to foster collective awareness that health is not solely an individual responsibility

but a shared responsibility within the community [17]. By empowering the community through counseling, the initiative also seeks to establish sustainable healthy habits, ensuring continuous improvements in public health quality. As awareness of PHBS grows, individuals are expected to become more independent in maintaining their health, reducing disease risks, and creating a cleaner and healthier living environment.

Literature Review

1. Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a process aimed at enhancing the capacity of individuals and groups within a community so that they can take control of their own lives and actively participate in social and economic development [18]. This concept emphasizes providing access to and control over resources, improving skills, and strengthening institutions that enable communities to make decisions that positively impact their lives [19], [20]. In the context of health, community empowerment is a crucial approach to increasing awareness and the ability of individuals to adopt a healthy lifestyle [21]. By empowering communities, they are expected to independently identify health problems, find appropriate solutions, and implement habits that support long-term well-being.

The implementation of community empowerment in the health sector often involves various stakeholders, such as the government, non-governmental organizations, healthcare professionals, and community leaders. An effective empowerment model includes participatory strategies, in which the community is not merely an object of change but also the primary actor in creating change itself [22], [23]. Through empowerment programs such as health training, counseling, and mentoring, communities can acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to improve their well-being [24]. Moreover, sustainable empowerment must be supported by policies that strengthen access to healthcare services, education, and economic opportunities, thereby fostering a more independent and prosperous society in the long run.

2. PHBS Counseling

PHBS counseling is a form of intervention designed to raise public awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle in daily life [25]. This counseling covers various health aspects, including personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, healthy eating patterns, physical activity, and the prevention of infectious diseases. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Dewi et al. [26], PHBS counseling is conducted using various methods, including lectures, group discussions, demonstrations, and hands-on practices, tailored to the characteristics and needs of the target community. Through this counseling, the community is expected not only to understand the importance of a healthy life but also to internalize and apply it in their daily routines [27], [28].

The success of PHBS counseling largely depends on the effectiveness of information delivery and the active involvement of the community in the learning process [29]. The communication strategies employed must be engaging, easy to understand, and relevant to the local community's conditions [30]. Additionally, the role of healthcare workers, integrated health post (*Pos Pelayanan Terpadu* or Posyandu) cadres, and community leaders is crucial in disseminating information and ensuring that healthy living habits become an integral part of the community's culture [31]. Counseling that is conducted regularly and sustainably can enhance the community's health literacy, making them more prepared to face health challenges and enabling them to make informed decisions to maintain individual and environmental health.

3. Health Status

The health status of a community is an important indicator that reflects the level of well-being and quality of life of a population [32]. Various factors influence health status, ranging from social, economic, and environmental aspects to access to healthcare services [33]. According to Blum's theory, the health status of a population is determined by four main factors: environment, behavior, healthcare services, and genetics. Among these factors, behavior, and environment play a significant role in determining the health status of individuals and communities as a whole [34]. Therefore, efforts to improve health status must be carried out comprehensively by considering the interrelated aspects.

One strategy to enhance health status is through health promotion and disease prevention. Programs such as PHBS, immunization, nutrition improvement, and access to clean water and proper sanitation can contribute to better community health status [34]. Additionally, government policies that focus on equitable healthcare services and improving healthcare facilities in remote areas play a vital role in achieving better health status. With synergy between individuals, communities, and the government in maintaining health, it is expected that disease and mortality rates can be reduced, ultimately leading to a significant improvement in the overall quality of life.

Material and Methods

This activity aims to increase public awareness and participation in implementing PHBS through interactive counseling methods, education in elementary schools, and joint community service. Counseling is carried out with a question and answer session to ensure participant understanding, while education in elementary schools teaches the practice of washing hands as a preventive measure. In addition, community service involves the community in maintaining environmental cleanliness.

The evaluation results showed an increase in public understanding of PHBS based on pretest and posttest scores. Housewives experienced an average score increase of 11.61%, while

elementary school students increased by 19.71%. This increase shows that interaction-based counseling methods are more effective than one-way lectures in increasing understanding and behavioral change. These findings support previous studies that emphasize the importance of active participation in health education. With increasing public awareness of PHBS, it is hoped that healthy behavior can be applied consistently in everyday life, creating a cleaner and healthier environment. This study recommends an interactive approach and direct practice in health education programs to increase the effectiveness of long-term behavioral change.

Results

The counseling activity accompanied by an interactive question and answer session was carried out according to the initial plan to improve public understanding of PHBS. Before the delivery of the material, participants were given a pretest to measure their initial level of knowledge about PHBS. The results of this pretest are the basis for seeing the effectiveness of counseling in improving public understanding.

Through this activity, counseling has been proven to be able to provide a positive impact on increasing public awareness and knowledge, especially in the implementation of PHBS in the household environment. The results of the pretest and posttest can be seen in the following picture.

Based on the results of descriptive statistics (Fig. 1), the scores obtained by housewives changed after the intervention. At the pretest stage, out of 30 respondents, the minimum score obtained was 56.67 and the maximum score was 83.33, with a total overall score of 2,103.33 and an average of 69.83. After the intervention at the post-test stage, there was a change with the minimum score decreasing slightly to 53.33, but the maximum score increased to 100. The total overall score also increased to 2,451.66, with an average increase of 82.04. This shows an increase in scores after the intervention, which can indicate a positive impact of the activities carried out.

Meanwhile, the scores for Elementary School students can be seen in Fig. 2. Descriptive statistical results indicate that the scores obtained by elementary school students improved after participating in a specific activity. In the pretest phase, with a total of 30 respondents, the minimum score was 53.33 and the maximum score was 83.33, resulting in a total score of 1,990 and an average score of 66.33. After the intervention, in the posttest phase, the minimum score increased to 75.00, while the maximum score reached 96.67, with a total score of 2,581.33 and a higher average score of 86.04. This increase demonstrates a positive change in students' scores following the implementation of the activity.

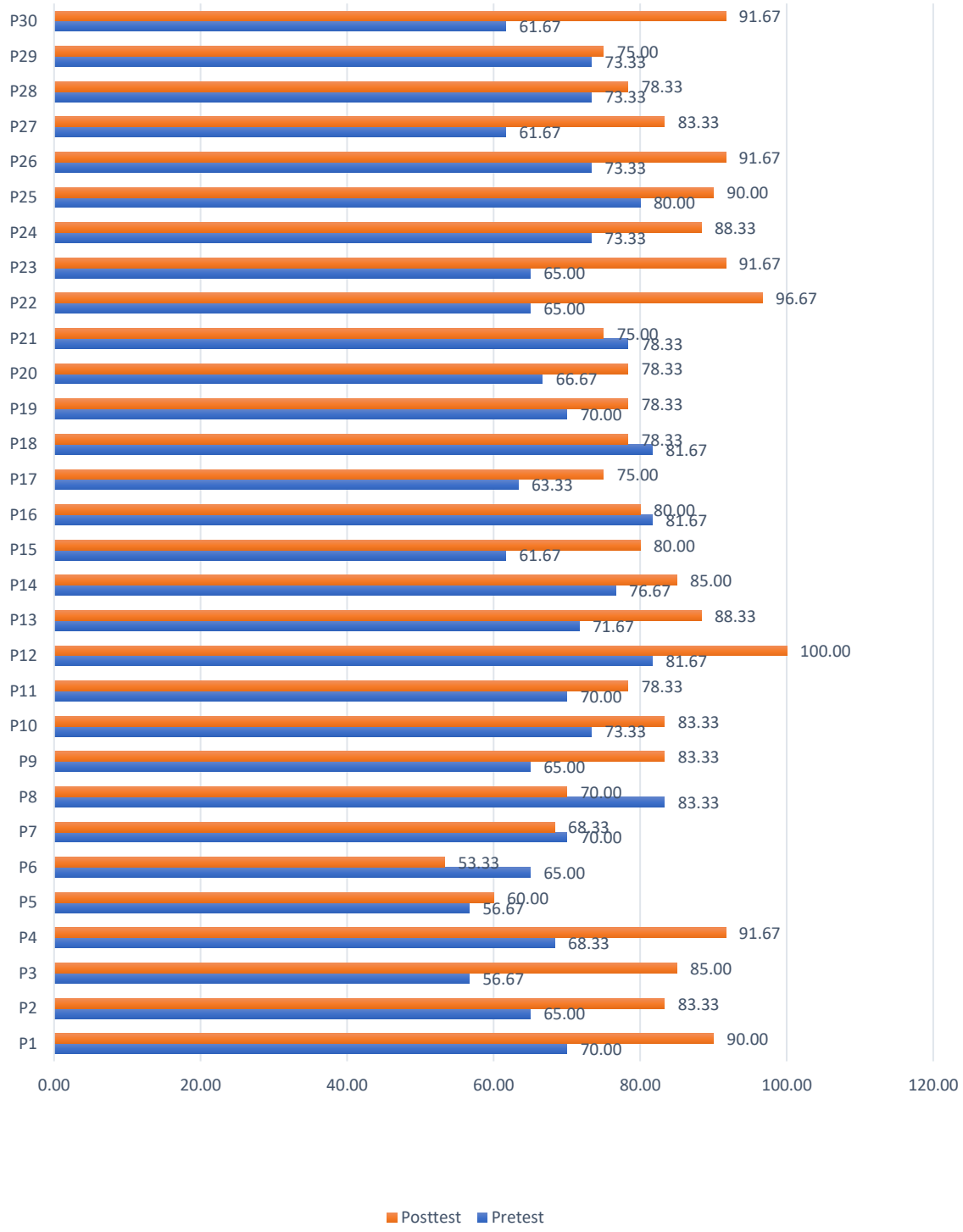


Fig. 1. Housewife Score's Achievement

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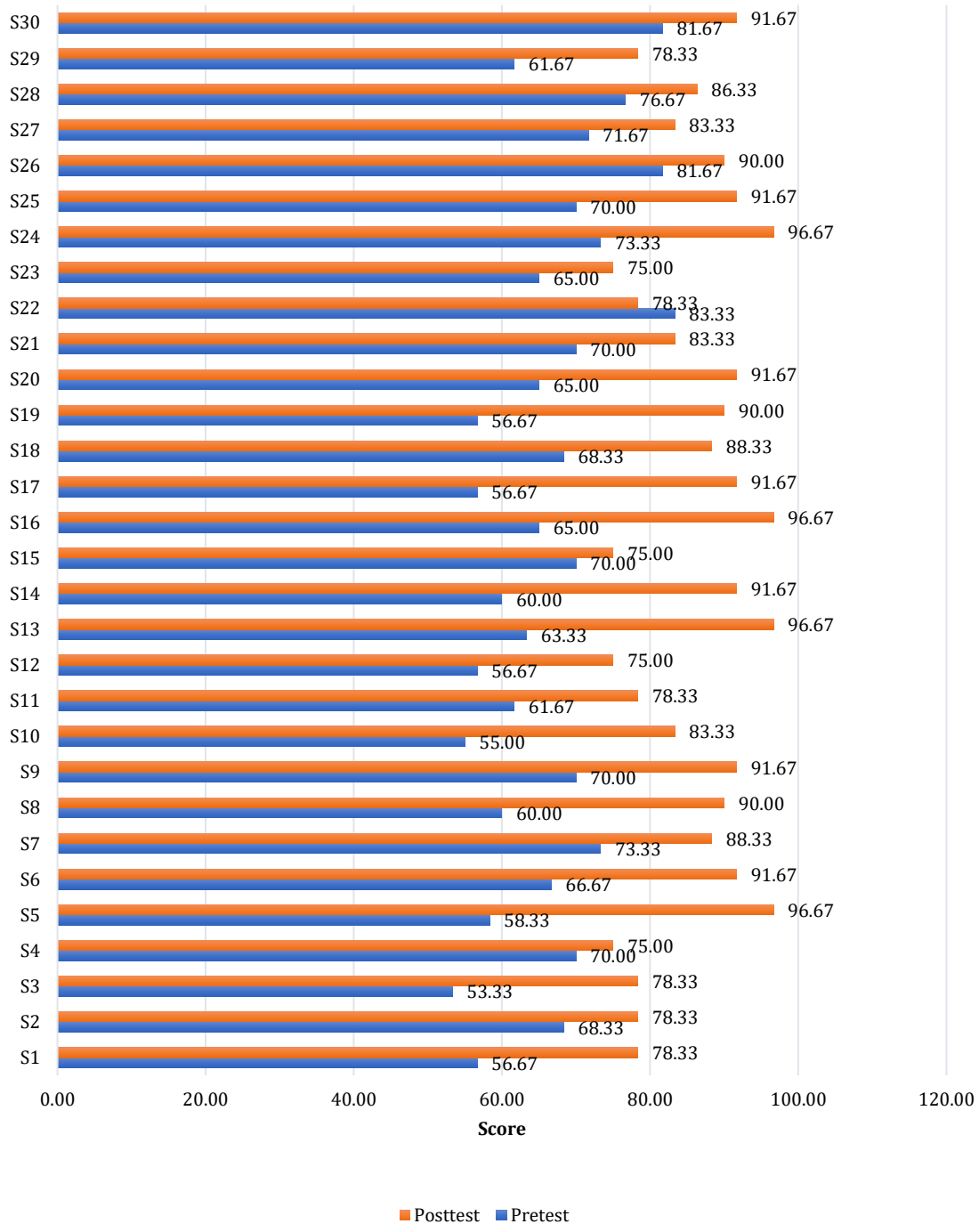


Fig. 2. Elementary School Students' Score Achievement

The evaluation results conducted after the counseling session showed a significant improvement in the community's understanding of PHBS. Knowledge levels were measured using pretest and posttest methods, which revealed that the counseling program successfully increased the understanding of housewives by 11.61% and elementary school students by 19.71%. This indicates that education through counseling not only provides information but also

helps the community internalize clean and healthy living habits more effectively. With increased awareness of the importance of PHBS, it is expected that the community will consistently adopt a healthy lifestyle in their daily lives.

Discussion

The research findings indicate that counseling activities accompanied by interactive question-and-answer sessions are effective in enhancing public understanding of PHBS. This is evident from the increase in pretest and posttest scores obtained by housewives and elementary school students after the intervention. Before the counseling session, participants were given a pretest to measure their initial understanding of PHBS. After the material was delivered and the interactive session was conducted, the post-test results showed a significant increase in scores. This improvement aligns with Krieger et al. [35] and Hanama et al. [36], indicating that the applied counseling method successfully improved participants' understanding of the importance of maintaining cleanliness and health in daily life.

In this study, housewives experienced an average score increase of 11.61%, while elementary school students showed an increase of 19.71%. This finding suggests that the educational method provided through interactive counseling is more effective than conventional learning methods that rely solely on lectures. These results are consistent with the study conducted by Andleeb et al. [37], which states that an interaction-based health education approach is more effective in enhancing public understanding compared to one-way counseling. The active involvement of participants in the question-and-answer sessions also played a crucial role in helping them better comprehend the concept of PHBS.

The study by Kale et al. [38] demonstrates that health education involving active participant engagement can lead to more sustainable behavioral changes. Another study conducted by Pisriwati et al. [39] found that educational programs based on discussions and hands-on practice are more effective in promoting healthy behaviors than approaches that merely convey theoretical knowledge. In the context of this research, the intervention not only improved participants' knowledge but also encouraged them to become more aware of implementing PHBS in both household and school environments.

The difference in the level of improvement between housewives and elementary school students can be explained by variations in cognitive levels and experience. Elementary school students tend to absorb new information more easily and adapt their habits, whereas housewives have long-established routines that take longer to change. This finding is in line with cognitive learning theory, which suggests that children respond more effectively to experiential learning than adults [40]. Therefore, counseling sessions for adults should emphasize practical applications and mentoring to ensure that behavioral changes are sustained in the long term.

Furthermore, the findings of this study reinforce the conclusions of Setiawan et al. [41] and Zein et al. [42], which highlight that the effectiveness of health counseling largely depends on the methods and media used to deliver the material. In this study, the use of an interactive approach proved to be more effective in improving participants' understanding compared to passive information delivery methods. Thus, health counselors must adopt strategies that encourage active public participation in every health education program.

Overall, this study demonstrates that interaction-based counseling is an effective strategy for enhancing public understanding and awareness of PHBS. Although there were differences in improvement levels between housewives and elementary school students, the results consistently showed a positive impact of the intervention. With this increased understanding, it is expected that the community will adopt clean and healthy living behaviors more consistently, ultimately improving overall health quality. Moving forward, further research should be conducted to evaluate the long-term impact of this counseling approach and to explore more effective methods for ensuring the sustainability of behavioral changes within the community.

Conclusion

This community service program plays a crucial role in enhancing public understanding of PHBS, positively impacting health quality in the working area of Puskesmas Gerbosari, Kulon Progo Regency. The community has become more aware of the importance of PHBS and understands behaviors that support overall health. Additionally, elementary school students have gained knowledge about PHBS and can practice proper handwashing techniques as a preventive measure against diseases. Public awareness of environmental cleanliness has also increased, encouraging active participation in health initiatives as a form of empowerment toward a better quality of life. Overall, this initiative has successfully improved both understanding and implementation of PHBS among students and residents, contributing to better public health conditions in the region.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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