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## Husband's Support Associated with Postpartum Family Planning Use



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### Abstract

Postpartum contraception prevents about 30% of maternal deaths and 10% of infant deaths within two years. As many as 62% of women who gave birth did not use contraception immediately after delivery. Therefore, this study aimed to analyze the correlation between maternal knowledge and husband's support for postpartum family planning use. This study was a cross-sectional study. The data was collected by interview and filling out questionnaires. The sample included mothers with no history of chronic and infectious diseases who were 42 days postpartum. Bivariate analysis was performed using chi-squared to evaluate the correlation between independent variables and dependent variables. A total of 42 women who gave birth were identified in this study, 21.4% were using postpartum family planning and 78.6% were not using postpartum family planning. Factors associated with postpartum family planning use were husband's support ( $p=0.038$ ), while maternal knowledge was not associated with postpartum family planning use ( $p=0.480$ ). Husband's support is associated with postpartum family planning use. Husband's support for family planning will have a significant impact on the family's decision to use a particular family planning tool or method.

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## INTRODUCTION

Post-partum family planning (PPFP) services are one of the strategies adopted by the government to accelerate the reduction of maternal mortality (MMR) and infant mortality (IMR) by preventing pregnancy, delaying pregnancy, spacing or limiting pregnancies. Postpartum family planning is a family planning service provided after childbirth up to 42 days/6 weeks ([WHO, 2013](#)). Efforts to improve family planning services, especially after childbirth, are considered the right strategy because during this period it can be ascertained that the mother is not pregnant, the motivation to use contraception is still high, and after delivery the mother will be more preoccupied to take care of the baby, so she will forget to start using contraception ([Kemenkes RI, 2021](#)). Fertility returns within a month after childbirth, unless the mother is breastfeeding; without breastfeeding, effective contraception must be started as soon as possible to avoid subsequent pregnancies ([Glasier et al., 2019](#)). Postpartum contraception prevents about 30% of maternal deaths and 10% of infant deaths in women <2 years apart. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends waiting at least 2 years after childbirth before attempting another pregnancy. Without breastfeeding, effective contraception should be initiated as soon as possible to avoid subsequent pregnancies ([Glasier et al., 2019](#)). Based on observations that pregnancy in the first year after delivery is associated with increased risk of premature fetal and neonatal death, preterm delivery, low birth weight, and babies small for gestational age ([Starbird & Crawford, 2019](#)).

Data from 57 low- and middle-income countries show that 62% of women who gave birth in the previous year did not use contraception immediately after delivery ([Rossier et al., 2015](#)). Even in high-income countries, the provision of effective postpartum contraception is often suboptimal ([Potter et al., 2017](#)). According to a study that evaluated data from nationally published studies and official statistics, there are an average of about 121 million unintended pregnancies worldwide each year, which translates into 64 unintended pregnancies per 1,000 women aged 15-49 years from 2015 to 2019 ([Mruts et al., 2022](#)). As many as 57.4% of fertile aged couples in Indonesia in 2021 have participated in the family planning program, but of all fertile aged couples who participated in the family planning program, only 40.4% were postpartum family planning

([Kemenkes RI, 2021](#)). East Nusa Tenggara Province is a province with a very low postpartum family planning achievement of 22.6%. Some areas in East Nusa Tenggara are even very far from this achievement, Central Sumba Regency is one of them, at least there are only 4.7% of fertile age couples who participate in postpartum family planning ([Dinas Kesehatan, Kependudukan dan Pencatatan Sipil Provinsi Nusa Tenggara Timur, 2021](#)). This shows that interest in postpartum family planning is still very low. In 2022, the prevalence of postpartum family planning in Central Sumba district experienced a significant increase (32%), out of 9 health centers in Central Sumba region, Puskesmas Wairasa was the health center with the lowest postpartum family planning coverage at 14%, there were 240 people (86%) of birth mothers who did not participate in postpartum family planning, this had an impact on the high cases of unplanned pregnancies and with a pregnancy gap of >2 years at Puskesmas Wairasa, namely 40 cases. Factors that influence postpartum family planning uptake are family planning education and counseling during antenatal care (ANC) and postnatal care (PNC) ([Mruts et al., 2022](#)). Through education and counseling at ANC and PNC, there is an increase in knowledge and support for mothers in making decisions about postpartum family planning. Maternal knowledge about postpartum family planning plays an important role in choosing the right family planning method that suits the mother's needs and circumstances. Knowledge about contraception and family planning is one of the prerequisites for understanding and using appropriate and effective contraceptive methods.

Postpartum contraceptive use has been strongly affected by husband's assistance ([Prata et al., 2017](#)). This is related to the decision to participate in family planning programs being determined by the husband, as for the majority of Indonesians, the husband is the head of the family ([D. P. K. Putri & Lestari, 2016](#)). The percentage of husband's role as motivator and facilitator of contraceptive use was high (64% and 86%) ([Marlinawati et al., 2019](#)). Husbands who understand and support the importance of good family planning are more likely to participate in family planning ([Ezeanolue et al., 2015](#)).

The high incidence of unplanned pregnancy and the low rate of postpartum family planning make it necessary for researchers to conduct a study on factors affecting postpartum family planning in

Central Sumba District. The variables to be studied are mother's knowledge and husband's support on the use of postpartum family planning. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the relationship between maternal knowledge and husband's support for postpartum family planning use. By knowing the relationship/influence of mother's knowledge and husband's support, promotional activities and interventions can be carried out to increase postpartum family planning in Central Sumba district.

## METHODS

This research was an observational study with a cross-sectional design conducted at Wairasa Health Center in Central Sumba in January - February 2024. The study sample included mothers were 42 days postpartum mothers at Wairasa Health Center in 2024 who were willing to become respondents. Mothers with a history of chronic and infectious diseases were excluded from this study. The research process began with the data collection process through preliminary research conducted by the researcher. The number of delivery services at Wairasa Health Center in December 2023 and January 2024 was 51 people. Sampling was done using purposive sampling, 9 people were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria, and obtained a sample size of 42 respondents. Data collection was done by interviewing the respondents using a questionnaire. The respondents were interviewed about the knowledge and husband's support with the use of postpartum family planning a previously prepared questionnaire. The questionnaire used for data collection was tested for validity and reliability. The results of the interview were analyzed to compile the report. The data obtained were then checked for

completeness, coded and analyzed using SPSS version 23.0. Univariate analysis was used to determine the distribution and characteristics of the study sample. Bivariate analysis was used to determine the correlation between the level of maternal knowledge and husband's support with the use of postpartum family planning. The bivariate analysis used in this study was the Chi-square test. This study has received research approval from KEPK Faculty of Medicine, Universitas Airlangga on January 18, 2024 with number 23/EC/KEPK/FKUA/2024.

The characteristics of the respondents include age, parity, occupation, and education. The independent variables in this study were mother's knowledge and husband's support, while postpartum family planning use was the dependent variable. The level of maternal knowledge was categorized into 3 categories, namely good, sufficient and less knowledge, while husband's support was categorized into support and no-support. Data on postpartum family planning use were reported as "yes" if the mother had used any of the contraceptive methods for up to 42 days after delivery.

## RESULTS

A total of 42 respondents participated in this study. Of the total sample, 78.6% were 20-35 years old, 71.4% were multiparous, 42.9% had completed primary and/or secondary school, and 66.7% were unemployed. Most respondents had sufficient knowledge about postpartum family planning (61.9%). Most respondents had husband's support in using postpartum family planning (69.0%). Most respondents did not use postpartum family planning (78.6%). ([Table 1](#)).

**Table 1.** Frequency Distribution of Respondents in Wairasa Health Center

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Maternal Age	<20 years	1	2.4
	20-35 years	33	78.6
	>35 years	8	19.0
Parity	Primiparous	10	23.8
	Multiparous	30	71.4
	Grande multiparous	2	4.8
Education	Illiterate	0	0.0
	Primary	18	42.9
	High-school	10	23.8
	University	14	33.3
Occupation	Unemployed	28	66.7

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Mother's knowledge	Employed	14	33.3
	Good	5	11.9
	Sufficient	26	61.9
	Less	11	26.2
Husband Support	Support	29	69.0
	No Support	13	31.0
Postpartum family planning use	Yes	9	21.4
	No	33	78.6

The results of the analysis in [Table 2](#) show that there is no significant correlation between maternal knowledge and the use of postpartum family planning (p value 0.480). The mothers who use postpartum family planning have more support from their husbands (31.0%) compared to the

mothers who do not have support from their husbands. The results of the analysis showed that there was a significant correlation between husbands' support and use of postpartum family planning (p value 0.038).

**Table 2.** Association between independent variable and postpartum family planning use

Variable	Category	Postpartum family planning use				Total		p value
		Yes		No		(n)	(%)	
		(n)	(%)	(n)	(%)			
Mother's knowledge	Good	1	20.0	4	80.0	5	100	0.480
	Sufficient	7	26.9	19	73.1	26	100	
	Less	1	9.1	10	90.9	11	100	
Husband Support	Support	9	31.0	20	69.0	29	100	0.038
	No Support	0	0.0	13	100	13	100	
Total		9	21,4	33	78,6	42	100	

## DISCUSSION

### The Correlation Between Maternal Knowledge and Postpartum Family Planning Use

Maternal knowledge about postpartum family planning in this study had no relationship with postpartum family planning use. This study is not in line with the study of Setiasih, which explains that there is a significant relationship between the knowledge of mother and the use of postpartum family planning ([Setiasih et al., 2016](#)). The results of a study on SDKI data analysis in 2012 found the same thing, that mothers with good knowledge were almost twice as likely to use contraceptives as mothers with low knowledge ([N. A. Putri & Ronoatmodjo, 2023](#)). Although many other studies have documented a significant correlation between maternal knowledge and postpartum family planning use, this may be due to differences in population characteristics, maternal attitudes, access to family planning services, and contraceptive availability.

Based on the researcher's observations, the characteristics of the population in the study site are closely related to culture and family decision-making, including decisions about contraceptive use, which are in the hands of the husband and thus influence postpartum family planning use. Women need permission and support from their husbands to use postpartum family planning. Some mothers have sufficient and insufficient knowledge, this can be seen from some mothers who know the type of contraception but do not understand how it works, when to use it, the benefits and side effects of the types of postpartum contraceptives. The participation in postpartum family planning is influenced by many factors. Some women who have good knowledge about postpartum family planning and have the support of their husbands but do not use postpartum family planning may be due to the attitude of the mother who does not want to use postpartum family planning, this may be related to her previous family planning experience. Access

to health facilities and availability of contraceptives are factors that pose a challenge in the participation of postpartum family planning, geographical conditions, distance of residence to health facilities and the availability of contraceptives that sometimes were not available in health facilities, in this case the puskesmas where the study was conducted because a request must be made in advance at the BKKBN, causing delays in the use of family planning.

### **The Correlation Between Husband's Support and Postpartum Family Planning Use**

Husband support was significantly related to postpartum family planning use in this study. This study is aligned with Setiasih's research, which explains that there is a significant relationship between husband support and the use of postpartum family planning (Setiasih et al., 2016). Husband support is associated with the decision to follow the family planning program, which is determined by the husband. Husband's support in contraceptive use is very necessary because without husband's support, a sense of comfort in contraceptive use will not be achieved. Husband support can be expressed through appreciation and interest in the wife, tolerance, showing affection and helping in decision making. Husband's support in allowing the wife is important for the wife to use contraception (Raidanti & Wahidin, 2019).

Husband's support in family planning will greatly influence the decision in the family to use a particular family planning tool or method. One of the considerations that influence the decision to use contraception is the characteristics and support of the partner or husband. Indonesia is one of the countries with strong patriarchal values, the patriarchal system also affects what contraceptives are chosen based on the husband's decision. The husband, who is the leader in a patriarchal culture, determines the participation in the family planning program (Sari & Hadi, 2023).

Even patrilineal culture is very prominent in some areas such as Sumba, East Nusa Tenggara province (Nurani et al., 2023). This culture describes or explains the condition of male superiority over women, a patrilineal culture that makes men the head of the family is still widely adopted by most family patterns in Indonesia, including decision makers regarding fertility. Women are faced with difficulties ranging from access to schools and sexual education, to lack of reproductive health rights, to determining the

number of children they want; women's need for contraception is limited by their partners who want more offspring. They have to fight harder for access to contraception (Harzif et al., 2022)

It is very important for women to understand reproductive health in order to control the number of births and reduce the risk of maternal mortality (Zoraya & Raijaya, 2020). It is expected that by improving women's status and independence, women will be more involved in fertility decisions (Astuti, 2021). Increasing knowledge through providing education using the Balanced Counseling Strategy is considered more effective in improving mothers' attitudes and knowledge about contraception (Darmastuti et al., 2020), it is expected to involve partners or husbands so that husbands as decision makers have good knowledge about postpartum family planning, thereby influencing attitudes and support for postpartum family planning participation.

### **CONCLUSION**

The factor associated with postpartum family planning use was husband's support, while mother's knowledge was not associated with postpartum family planning use. Husband's support for family planning will significantly influence the decision to use certain family planning tools or methods.

### **SUGGESTION**

It is important for women to understand reproductive health in order to control the number of births and reduce the risk of mortality in childbirth. Several recommendations to reduce the unmet need for postpartum contraception include education and face-to-face discussions between service providers and couples to increase knowledge and acceptance of contraception. Face-to-face discussions with partners can be used to increase knowledge and acceptability of contraception. Support from service providers and local governments for women to negotiate with male partners as partners to reduce disagreements, sex education, and family planning services to reduce unwanted pregnancies. Women's empowerment is an important strategy for strengthening women's roles and capacities. It is based on the idea that women must be independent so that development can be shared by all. It is hoped that by increasing women's status and independence, they will become more involved in decisions about fertility.

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**CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

**AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

S.H., R.D. and B.P. contributed in the design and implementation of the research, the analysis of the results, and the writing of the manuscript.

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