



World Breastfeeding Week 2024: An Intimate Breastfeeding Education Session with Working Mothers in BASF Indonesia

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Abstract

The theme for WBW 2024, "Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All," underscores the necessity of equitable breastfeeding support, especially for working mothers who face unique challenges. This paper discusses the implementation of an intimate breastfeeding education session held by IKMI in collaboration with PT. BASF Indonesia during WBW 2024. The session aimed to provide essential knowledge, practical advice, and emotional support to working mothers to promote breastfeeding within the workplace. The initiative involved a collaborative effort between IKMI, healthcare professionals, lactation counselors, and BASF Indonesia's internal human resources team. The session included expert presentations and interactive workshops, employing methods such as demonstrations and the Socratic Method to engage participants. Eleven female staff members participated, receiving hands-on guidance on breastfeeding techniques and management. The session was structured to be interactive and supportive, featuring opening remarks, expert presentations on breastfeeding benefits and challenges, and interactive Q&A. Participants reported enhanced knowledge and confidence in breastfeeding practices, as well as a stronger sense of community and support among peers. The breastfeeding education session was a successful initiative that significantly contributed to promoting breastfeeding within the workplace. Recommendations include conducting regular education sessions, investing in better lactation facilities, implementing supportive workplace policies, and creating ongoing peer support networks.

Keywords: *BASF Indonesia, breastfeeding support, IKMI, lactation education, maternal health, World Breastfeeding Week, working mothers*

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INTRODUCTION

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is an annual global campaign aimed at promoting breastfeeding as a vital component of sustainable development. It is celebrated annually from August 1-7 to raise awareness and support for breastfeeding practices worldwide. Recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), WBW aims to highlight the immense benefits of breastfeeding for both infants and mothers, fostering a culture of health and well-being (WHO, 2023). The theme for WBW 2024, "Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All," highlights the need to provide equitable breastfeeding support to all mothers, regardless of their circumstances. This theme resonates strongly with the current challenges faced by working mothers, who often encounter barriers that prevent them from breastfeeding successfully.

In 2024, Indonesia Breastfeeding Counselors Association (*Ikatan Konselor Menyusui Indonesia*), known as IKMI, collaborated with PT. BASF (*Badische Anilin und Soda Fabric*)

Indonesia marked WBW by organizing an intimate breastfeeding education session for its working mothers. This initiative aimed to provide essential knowledge, practical advice, and emotional support to promote breastfeeding among employees, aligning with global efforts to improve maternal and child health (UNICEF, 2023). The session featured expert speakers, including lactation counsellor and healthcare professionals, who shared valuable insights on the importance of breastfeeding, techniques to overcome common challenges, and strategies to balance breastfeeding with professional responsibilities (Jones et al., 2021).

By hosting this event, BASF Indonesia demonstrated its commitment to the well-being of its employees and their families. This initiative not only empowered working mothers with the confidence and resources they needed to successfully breastfeed but also reinforced the company's dedication to creating a supportive and inclusive workplace environment. Through education and advocacy, the session contributed to the broader goal of enhancing maternal and child health outcomes, reflecting the spirit and objectives of World Breastfeeding Week (Smith & Brown, 2022). The goal of this initiative was to bridge the gap in breastfeeding support within the workplace, offering tailored education, resources, and community support to empower working mothers in their breastfeeding journey.

This paper discusses the implementation of the intimate breastfeeding education session held by IKMI at BASF Indonesia during WBW 2024. It explores the session's design, delivery, and outcomes, emphasizing the importance of targeted support for working mothers. Through this initiative, IKMI with BASF Indonesia seeks to contribute to the broader goal of closing the gap in breastfeeding support, ensuring that all mothers have the opportunity to breastfeed their children for as long as they choose. The objectives of this event is to provide practical advice and techniques on effective breastfeeding during working, to create a supportive community within the workplace for breastfeeding mothers and to motivate working mothers to continue breastfeeding despite workplace challenges.

METHODOLOGY

Identifying the Need

IKMI approach BASF Indonesia to collaborate in designing education session to celebrate WBW 2024. Recognizing the need to support breastfeeding mothers within its workforce, BASF Indonesia agree to be the host of this event. Many working mothers face challenges that can hinder their ability to breastfeed, such as lack of time, inadequate facilities, and limited knowledge. The initiative involved collaboration with healthcare professionals, lactation counsellor, and internal human resources teams. This collaboration ensured the provision of accurate information and relevant resources during the session. The session was scheduled at 23rd July 2024. Internal communication channels, using e-flyer, were used to inform employees about the event and encourage participation. The implementation process of this community service was carried out through several stages: (1) First, together with the committee and the institution, a coordination meeting was held to determine the timing of the community service. (2) Together with the committee, preparations were made for the venue and alignment of perceptions was conducted.



Figure 1. Event e-flyer

Delivery of the material

The community service methods employed included demonstrations and the Socratic Method. The Socratic Method is a form of cooperative dialogue that stimulates critical thinking and illuminates ideas through a question-and-answer approach. Named after the classical Greek philosopher Socrates, this method involves four key elements, consist of questioning, dialogue, critical thinking and active participation (Gose, 2009). Initially, explanations and demonstrations were provided to the participants, who were breastfeeding working mothers employed at PT BASF Indonesia. This activity involved professionals such as a nutritionist and a general practitioner, both of whom are lactation counselors, along with two students from the Nutrition Study Program at Universitas Esa Unggul. The total number of participants in this community service project was 11 female staff members who volunteered to participate. The media used included PowerPoint presentations on lactation management for working mothers, a breast model, and a baby model.

RESULT

Structure of the Session

The breastfeeding education session was designed to be interactive and supportive, including the following components:

1. The event commenced with an opening speech by dr. Rony A.P. Tamba, M.Si, the chairman of IKMI. dr. Tamba's address emphasized the theme of World Breastfeeding Week 2024, "Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All." He provided an overview of the day's activities, designed to foster active engagement and encourage participants to ask questions. Dr. Tamba also expressed gratitude to the organizers, sponsors, and participants, highlighting the collaborative efforts between IKMI and PT BASF Indonesia. Following Dr. Tamba's remarks, Mr. Lutfi Hemdarsyah S., Kep., Ners, a representative and paramedic from PT BASF Indonesia, delivered a speech. He reiterated the significance of the event and underscored the importance of providing breastfeeding support within the workplace.



Figure 2. Opening remarks from IKMI and BASF Indonesia

2. Expert Presentations: Healthcare professionals provided insights into the benefits of breastfeeding, common challenges, and practical solutions from two breastfeeding counsellors which is also general practitioner and a nutritionist. The presentation included several key activities focused on educating working mothers at PT BASF Indonesia about practical guidance on the correct methods for expressing breastmilk, instructions on how to properly store breast milk to maintain its quality and safety, guidance on preparing stored breast milk for feeding.



Figure 3. Presentation Session

3. Interactive Q&A and workshop: Participants engaged in a question-and-answer session, addressing their specific concerns and experiences. Hands-on workshops demonstrated effective breastfeeding techniques and the use of breastfeeding aids.



Figure 4. Workshop Session

4. Resource Distribution: Participants also received breastfeeding supplies like nursing pads and storage bags.



Figure 5. Resource Distribution

Creating a Supportive Environment

A comfortable and private setting was chosen for the session to ensure participants felt at ease. Refreshments were provided, and the atmosphere was designed to foster open discussion and peer support.



Figure 6. Complete Picture of Participants and Educators

DISCUSSIONS

The breastfeeding education session held by IKMI at BASF Indonesia during World Breastfeeding Week 2024 was an exemplary initiative aimed at supporting working mothers. This event aligns with the global theme "Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All," which underscores the importance of equitable support for breastfeeding mothers. The session was

well-structured, incorporating educational presentations, interactive workshops, and resource distribution, effectively addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by working mothers.

Addressing Barriers to Breastfeeding in the Workplace

The session saw active participation from 11 working mothers. The interactive format encouraged high levels of engagement, with participants sharing personal stories and seeking advice from experts and peers. In the question and answer session, more than a half of the participants ask questions, share their past experiences during breastfeeding and worries about the next challenge, especially during weaning phase. Working mothers often encounter significant obstacles when trying to balance their professional responsibilities with breastfeeding. These challenges include insufficient time, lack of private and hygienic spaces for expressing milk, and inadequate support from employers and colleagues (Brown, 2017; Johnston & Esposito, 2007; Payne & James, 2008).

The session at BASF Indonesia tackled these issues by providing practical advice and demonstrating techniques for expressing and storing breast milk. By creating a supportive environment, the initiative helped mitigate some of the common barriers, empowering mothers to continue breastfeeding. Participants reported practical benefits, such as learning effective breastfeeding techniques, understanding how to manage breastfeeding with work commitments, and gaining access to useful resources.

Importance of Education and Awareness

Education plays a crucial role in promoting breastfeeding. Research has shown that mothers who receive adequate information and support are more likely to initiate and sustain breastfeeding (Renfrew et al., 2012). The expert presentations during the session covered essential topics such as the benefits of breastfeeding, methods to overcome common challenges, and balancing breastfeeding with work commitments. This comprehensive approach ensured that participants were well-informed and better prepared to make informed decisions about breastfeeding. Proper education and workplace accommodations are essential in helping these mothers continue breastfeeding, which has profound health benefits for both the mother and the infant (Victora et al., 2016; Rollins et al., 2016).

Community and Emotional Support

Creating a supportive community is vital for the success of breastfeeding initiatives. Emotional support from peers, family, and employers can significantly impact a mother's breastfeeding journey (Thomson et al., 2015). The interactive Q&A and workshops facilitated peer interaction, allowing mothers to share their experiences and support each other. This sense of community, combined with the professional guidance provided, fostered a positive environment conducive to successful breastfeeding. The session helped build a supportive community among breastfeeding mothers at BASF Indonesia. Participants formed connections, exchanged contact information, and committed to supporting each other beyond the session.

Long-Term Impact on Maternal and Child Health

Breastfeeding has long-term health benefits for both mothers and children. It reduces the risk of certain illnesses, promotes bonding, and supports optimal child development (Victora et al., 2016). By hosting this event, BASF Indonesia not only promoted immediate benefits but also contributed to the long-term health and well-being of its employees and their families. This aligns with the broader goals of World Breastfeeding Week and global health organizations' efforts to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

Corporate Responsibility and Workplace Policies

The involvement of BASF Indonesia in this initiative highlights the role of corporate responsibility in promoting health and well-being. Companies that implement supportive breastfeeding policies and provide resources for breastfeeding mothers set a positive example and contribute to a healthier workforce (Fein et al., 2008). This event demonstrated BASF

Indonesia's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace, which can lead to increased employee satisfaction and retention.

CONCLUSION AND RECCOMENDATIONS

The breastfeeding education session organized by IKMI and BASF Indonesia during World Breastfeeding Week 2024 was a successful and impactful initiative. By addressing the barriers faced by working mothers, providing education and resources, and fostering a supportive community, the event significantly contributed to promoting breastfeeding within the workplace. This initiative serves as a model for other organizations to follow, highlighting the importance of targeted support and corporate responsibility in enhancing maternal and child health. Some participants found it challenging to balance the session with their work schedules.

Based on the implementation, it recommended to conduct regular breastfeeding education sessions to sustain knowledge and support, if possible multiple times or recorded for later viewing. Invest in better lactation facilities and resources at the workplace. Develop and implement workplace policies that support breastfeeding, such as flexible working hours and dedicated breaks for breastfeeding mothers. Then for ongoing support with create a peer support network and provide continuous access to lactation consultants and resources.

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