



Journal i Mappedic

Vol. 2 No. 2, 2024 (Page: 77-86)

DOI:

Community-Based Health Promotion and Its Impact on Preventive Health Behavior in Rural Communities

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Article History

Submitted: 19 September 2024, Revised: 15 October 2024, Accepted: 14 December 2024

Keywords

Community-Based Health Promotion, Preventive Health Behavior, Rural Communities, Community Participation, Health Awareness

Abstract

Community-based health promotion is a strategic approach to improving preventive health behavior, particularly in rural communities that continue to face limited access to health services and health information. This study aims to examine the role of community-based health promotion and its impact on increasing knowledge, shaping attitudes, and enhancing preventive health practices in rural populations. The study employs a literature review method by analyzing relevant academic sources, including books and peer-reviewed journal articles published in reputable scholarly databases. The findings indicate that community-based health promotion significantly contributes to improving health knowledge and awareness through participatory and context-sensitive approaches aligned with local socio-cultural conditions. Increased knowledge fosters more positive attitudes toward preventive health behaviors, encouraging communities to adopt healthier lifestyles as part of their daily routines. Furthermore, the review reveals improvements in preventive health practices, such as the implementation of clean and healthy living behaviors and greater participation in community health activities. The success of community-based health promotion initiatives is strongly influenced by community participation, support from local leaders, and a sense of ownership over health programs. Overall, community-based health promotion is demonstrated to be a holistic and sustainable approach to fostering preventive health behavior in rural communities. This study recommends strengthening community empowerment and active participation in the planning and implementation of health programs to enhance the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of promotive and preventive health interventions.

Introduction

Health issues in rural communities remain a major challenge in many developing countries, including Indonesia. Limited access to health facilities, low health literacy, and unfavorable socioeconomic conditions often result in low levels of preventive health behaviors. Rural

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communities tend to face geographical barriers, a shortage of health workers, and limited access to relevant information, resulting in disease prevention not being a top priority in daily life (Hariani, 2025). This situation contributes to the high prevalence of diseases that could be prevented through simple but consistent changes in health behavior.

Community-based health promotion has emerged as a strategic approach to address these challenges (Wahab, 2025). This approach emphasizes active community involvement throughout the entire health intervention process, from problem identification and program planning to activity implementation and outcome evaluation. According to the modern health promotion approach formulated by the World Health Organization, health promotion focuses not only on disseminating information but also on empowering individuals and communities to control the factors that influence their health. Thus, communities are positioned as key actors, not merely objects of health programs.

In rural contexts, community-based health promotion has particularly strong relevance due to the tightly knit social structures and dominant collective values. Strong social ties enable the more effective dissemination of health values, norms, and behaviors through informal social mechanisms. Previous research has shown that health promotion programs involving community leaders, health cadres, and local organizations tend to be more accepted by the community and have a greater chance of sustainability (Darmawan et al., 2025). This active participation also strengthens a sense of ownership of the health program, ultimately contributing to more lasting behavior change.

Preventive health behavior is one of the main indicators in assessing the success of health promotion. This behavior encompasses various actions taken by individuals or groups to prevent disease, such as maintaining personal and environmental hygiene, adopting a healthy diet, engaging in regular physical activity, and utilizing preventive health services like immunizations and routine health checkups. Health behavior theory explains that changes in preventive behavior are influenced by the interaction between knowledge, attitudes, social norms, and environmental support (Harjana, 2023). Therefore, interventions that focus solely on increasing knowledge are often insufficient without adequate social and structural support.

Several empirical studies have shown that community-based health promotion can have a positive impact on increasing health knowledge and awareness in rural communities (Januraga & Ked, 2024). This increase in knowledge is generally followed by more positive changes in attitudes toward preventive health practices. In some cases, community health promotion programs have also succeeded in increasing community participation in collective health activities, such as integrated health posts (Posyandu), prenatal classes, and environmental sanitation activities. This indicates that community-based approaches not only influence individual behavior but also encourage the formation of healthy habits at the societal level.

However, the impact of community-based health promotion on preventive behavior change is not always linear and instantaneous. Several studies report that health behavior change often occurs gradually and is influenced by various contextual factors, such as local culture, traditional beliefs, and the community's economic conditions (Agustina, 2025). Furthermore, limited resources and program sustainability are also major challenges in implementing health promotion in rural areas. Programs that are not designed contextually and participatory risk losing relevance and community support in the long term. Therefore, evaluating the impact of community-based health promotion is crucial to understand the extent to which this approach

is effective in improving preventive health behaviors. This evaluation should focus not only on the final outcome of behavior change, but also on the program implementation process and the accompanying social dynamics. A comprehensive understanding of the relationship between community-based health promotion and preventive behavior will significantly contribute to the development of more contextual and sustainable promotive and preventive strategies in rural communities (Mawardika et al., 2025).

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the impact of community-based health promotion on preventive health behaviors in rural communities. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of public health promotion studies and provide practical recommendations for health program planners and implementers in an effort to improve the quality of rural community health in a sustainable manner.

Methods

Literature Method (Literature Review)

This research employed a literature review method to in-depth examine the concept of community-based health promotion and its impact on preventive health behaviors in rural communities. This approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding through the review and synthesis of relevant previous research findings, both theoretical and empirical. Through the literature review method, researchers were able to identify current research developments, patterns of findings, and open research gaps in the field of community health promotion.

Data collection was conducted by searching various credible scientific sources, including national and international journal articles, academic books, and health institution reports relevant to the research topic. The literature used was selected from publications of academic quality and substantive relevance to the theme of community-based health promotion and preventive health behaviors in rural areas. The literature search was conducted systematically using keywords related to community-based health promotion, preventive health behaviors, and the rural community context, either singly or in specific combinations to broaden the search scope.

The collected literature was then selected based on its suitability to the research focus. Sources that were not directly relevant or lacked a strong academic basis were excluded from the analysis. Following the selection process, the selected literature was analyzed in-depth using a thematic analysis approach. This analysis was conducted by identifying key themes emerging across various studies, such as the forms and strategies of community-based health promotion, levels of community participation, social and cultural factors influencing preventive health behaviors, and the impact of interventions on changes in public health knowledge, attitudes, and practices.

The literature analysis process also considered the social and cultural context underlying each research finding. This is crucial to ensure that the literature synthesis is not merely descriptive but also able to explain the dynamics and complexities of community-based health promotion in rural communities. By considering these varied contexts, this study seeks to generate a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness and challenges of implementing community-based health promotion in encouraging preventive health behaviors.

The results of this literature review were then used as a basis for developing a conceptual framework for the study and formulating practical implications. Through this approach, the research is expected to contribute academically to the development of evidence-based and community-empowerment-oriented public health promotion strategies, as well as serve as a reference for health program planners and implementers in sustainably improving preventive health behaviors in rural communities.

Results and Discussion

Increasing Public Health Knowledge and Awareness

The results of a literature review indicate that community-based health promotion plays a significant role in improving public health knowledge, particularly in rural areas. According to Landi et al. (2025), health promotion conducted through a community approach can broaden public understanding of the determinants of health because the information delivery process is contextual and participatory. Various studies reviewed in the public health literature indicate that health education that directly involves the community is more effective than top-down approaches, particularly in improving basic health literacy related to disease prevention.

Improved public health knowledge is evident in individuals' ability to recognize disease risk factors and understand preventive measures that can be taken in daily life. Increased knowledge is a crucial initial stage in the process of changing health behavior, as knowledge serves as a cognitive foundation for the formation of attitudes and awareness. In the context of rural communities, community-based health promotion helps bridge the gap in access to information by conveying health messages through media and language that are easily understood and appropriate to the local culture.

In addition to increasing knowledge, community-based health promotion also contributes to increasing public health awareness. Health awareness is not only related to having information but also to understanding the importance of maintaining health as an individual and collective responsibility. Oktaviana & Solihin (2025) emphasized that good health literacy enables individuals to be more aware of their health conditions and make more informed decisions regarding preventive behaviors. Through group discussions, mentoring from health cadres, and the involvement of community leaders, health values are gradually internalized in the social life of rural communities.

This increase in health awareness is also reflected in changes in the community's perspective on disease prevention efforts. Several pieces of literature indicate that prior to health promotion interventions, rural communities tended to view health in a curative manner, focusing solely on treatment when sick. However, after the implementation of community-based health promotion, a paradigm shift occurred toward a preventive approach, where people began to recognize the importance of maintaining cleanliness, a healthy diet, and regular health check-ups. This paradigm shift aligns with the Health Belief Model of health behavior theory, which states that increased perceptions of benefits and awareness of risks play a crucial role in encouraging preventive behaviors (Arindari et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the literature also shows that increasing public health knowledge and awareness is inseparable from social aspects and community support. Aziz et al. (2024) emphasizes that the social learning process allows individuals to imitate and adopt healthy behaviors practiced by other community members who are considered role models. In community-based health

promotion, health cadres and community leaders act as agents of change, reinforcing health messages through role models and social interactions. Thus, increased health knowledge and awareness not only occurs at the individual level but also develops into a collective awareness that strengthens preventive health practices in rural communities.

Changes in Attitudes towards Preventive Health Behavior

The results of the literature review indicate that community-based health promotion not only impacts increased knowledge but also contributes significantly to changes in community attitudes toward preventive health behaviors. Attitude is an affective component that reflects an individual's tendency to accept or reject a particular behavior. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, a positive attitude toward a behavior will increase an individual's intention to perform that behavior. In the context of community-based health promotion, participatory health messaging can shape more positive attitudes toward disease prevention measures (Setiawan & Indriani, 2025).

This change in community attitudes is evident in the increased acceptance of preventive health practices as a necessity, rather than a burden or external obligation. The literature indicates that before health promotion interventions, some rural communities tended to view preventive behaviors, such as routine health check-ups or adopting a healthy lifestyle, as less urgent. However, after participating in community-based health promotion activities, the community began to view these behaviors as important investments for long-term health. This aligns with the Health Belief Model, which states that individual attitudes are influenced by perceived benefits and the seriousness of health risks (Fransiska et al., 2022).

Furthermore, community-based health promotion encourages a more open attitude toward behavioral change by strengthening social norms. In rural environments with strong social ties, individual attitudes are strongly influenced by the views and behaviors of other community members. Through the social learning process, individuals tend to adopt the attitudes and behaviors practiced by figures considered significant, such as community leaders or health cadres. Therefore, when preventive health behaviors are promoted and modeled by community figures, community attitudes toward these behaviors become more positive and supportive.

This change in attitude is also reflected in an increased sense of community responsibility for personal and collective health. Health promotion literature shows that a community-based approach can foster awareness that health is not solely an individual matter, but a shared concern. This attitude encourages communities to be more concerned about environmental cleanliness, infectious disease prevention, and participation in community health activities. Santoso et al. (2024) emphasize that effective health promotion not only enhances individual capabilities but also fosters critical and participatory attitudes toward health issues at the community level.

Furthermore, changes in attitudes toward preventive health behaviors serve as a bridge between increased knowledge and actual behavior change. Literature shows that communities with positive attitudes toward health tend to be more consistent in implementing preventive behaviors than those with only knowledge but no supportive attitudes. This reinforces the view that community-based health promotion functions as a psychosocial transformation process that not only transfers information but also shapes the attitudes and values that underlie health actions.

Improving Preventive Health Behavior Practices

The results of the literature review indicate that community-based health promotion significantly contributes to increasing the practice of preventive health behaviors in rural communities. Preventive health behaviors refer to concrete actions taken by individuals and groups to prevent disease and maintain health, such as maintaining personal and environmental hygiene, adopting a healthy diet, engaging in physical activity, and utilizing preventive health services. According to Chandrawati et al. (2023), changes in health behaviors result from the interaction of predisposing, supporting, and reinforcing factors, all of which can be influenced through a community-based health promotion approach.

Improved preventive health behavior practices are evident in the community's increased consistency in implementing clean and healthy lifestyles in their daily lives. The literature shows that after implementing community-based health promotion, rural communities more routinely engage in preventive actions such as proper handwashing, maintaining a clean home environment, and managing basic sanitation. These practices become more internalized when health messages are conveyed through repeated community activities and involve social interactions among community members.

In addition to hygiene and sanitation practices, community-based health promotion also encourages increased utilization of preventive health services. People show a greater tendency to participate in routine health checkups, immunizations, and community-based health activities, such as integrated health posts (Posyandu) or periodic health checkups. Preventive behavior practices increase when individuals have a high perception of benefits and low barriers to health interventions. Community-based health promotion plays a role in reducing these barriers by providing clear information and strong social support.

Increased preventive health behavior practices are also influenced by the role of role models and social reinforcement within the community. Individuals tend to imitate behaviors observed in others who are considered influential or role models. In the context of community-based health promotion, health cadres and community leaders serve as behavioral models, directly demonstrating healthy lifestyle practices (Zalianty & Falasifah, 2025). This role model strengthens the community's motivation to adopt similar behaviors on an ongoing basis.

Furthermore, literature shows that preventive health behavior practices tend to be more persistent when supported by established social norms within the community. When healthy behaviors become part of collective habits, individuals are encouraged to maintain these practices due to social expectations and a sense of shared responsibility. Effective health promotion not only results in changes in individual behavior but also creates a social environment that supports health practices (Oktavilantika et al., 2023). In rural communities, these changes in practices strengthen the community's capacity to maintain health independently.

The Role of Community Participation in Program Success

The literature review indicates that community participation is a key factor in determining the success of community-based health promotion programs, particularly in rural areas. Community participation is not only defined as community involvement in activities but also includes active community participation in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health programs. Community participation is an essential element in health promotion because

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it allows programs to be tailored to the needs, values, and socio-cultural context of the local community, thereby increasing the relevance and effectiveness of interventions (Anggraini et al., 2025).

Active community participation contributes to a heightened sense of ownership of health programs. The literature shows that when communities are involved from the early planning stages, they tend to view the program as part of a shared need, rather than an external intervention. This sense of ownership fosters community commitment to consistent participation and ensures program sustainability. The concept of the ladder of citizen participation emphasizes that higher levels of participation result in greater community control and responsibility over the program (Mas et al., 2025).

Furthermore, community participation strengthens program effectiveness by leveraging local resources and existing social networks. In rural communities, close social ties enable the wider and faster dissemination of health information. Health cadres, traditional leaders, and informal leaders act as agents of change, bridging health messages with the community's daily practices. Social influence and role models within groups play a significant role in shaping individual behavior, making the involvement of local actors a strategic element in the success of health promotion.

The literature also shows that community participation plays a role in increasing community trust in health programs. Programs implemented with active community involvement tend to be more trusted than top-down programs. This trust influences the community's willingness to accept health messages and adopt recommended preventive behaviors. Social support and community involvement are important reinforcing factors in the process of health behavior change, as they provide social legitimacy to the health practices introduced (Linda et al., 2025).

Furthermore, community participation also plays a crucial role in maintaining the sustainability of health promotion programs. The literature shows that programs that rely solely on external support often experience a decline in effectiveness when support ends. Conversely, programs that are embedded within the community's social structure have a greater chance of continuing independently. Community empowerment through active participation not only results in short-term behavioral changes, but also builds community capacity to manage health issues sustainably.

Discussion

Research findings indicate that community-based health promotion plays a significant role in increasing health knowledge and awareness in rural communities. Effective health promotion must be oriented towards community empowerment and strengthening individual capacity to control the determinants of their health. In rural contexts, increasing health knowledge through a community approach is crucial due to limited access to formal information. Participatory and contextualized educational processes enable communities to understand health issues not only theoretically but also in relation to the realities of their daily lives.

This increased knowledge contributes to a stronger health awareness, reflected in a change in the community's perspective on health. Prior to health promotion interventions, communities tended to view health in a curative manner, focusing on treatment when sick. However, research findings indicate a paradigm shift toward a preventative approach, where communities are beginning to recognize the importance of disease prevention efforts. Increased health

literacy enables individuals and communities to be more aware, reflective, and proactive in maintaining their health.

Furthermore, research findings indicate that increased health knowledge and awareness have direct implications for changing community attitudes toward preventive health behaviors. Attitudes that were previously passive and less supportive are shifting to more positive and open attitudes toward healthy lifestyle practices. This can be explained through the Theory of Planned Behavior, where a positive attitude toward a behavior is a crucial determinant in shaping behavioral intentions. Community-based health promotion, through group discussions and the role models of local leaders, plays a role in shaping attitudes that support the adoption of preventive health behaviors as part of accepted social norms.

These attitudinal changes are then reflected in increased preventive health behavior practices in rural communities. Research results show that people are beginning to adopt clean and healthy lifestyles more consistently, utilizing preventive health services, and actively participating in community health activities. Changes in health behavior result from the interaction of predisposing factors (knowledge and attitudes), supporting factors (access and facilities), and reinforcing factors (social support). Community-based health promotion can influence all three factors simultaneously.

This discussion also emphasizes that the success of community-based health promotion is inseparable from the role of community participation. Active community involvement in program planning and implementation fosters a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for the program's success. Meaningful participation allows communities to have greater control over programs that affect their interests. In this study, community participation strengthened community trust in health programs and encouraged the sustainability of preventive health practices after the intervention concluded.

Furthermore, social learning that occurs through community interactions plays a crucial role in sustaining behavioral change. Individuals tend to imitate behaviors observed in influential figures. In community-based health promotion, health cadres and community leaders serve as models of healthy behavior, reinforcing the internalization of health values. This explains why preventive behavior change is more likely to persist when supported by social norms and role models within the community.

Conclusion

Community-based health promotion is an effective approach to improving preventive health behaviors in rural communities through an interconnected process of increasing knowledge, changing attitudes, strengthening behavioral practices, and active community participation. The study results indicate that a community-based approach can improve public health knowledge and awareness in a more contextual and accessible manner, so that people not only understand health information cognitively but also recognize the importance of disease prevention as part of their individual and collective responsibility. This increased knowledge contributes to the formation of more positive attitudes toward preventive health behaviors, where people begin to view healthy living practices as a long-term necessity, not simply a response to illness. This change in attitude is further reflected in increased preventive health behavior practices, such as the adoption of clean and healthy living behaviors, utilization of preventive health services, and involvement in community-level health activities. The success

of these changes is inseparable from the role of strong community participation, where community involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of health programs fosters a sense of ownership, increases trust, and strengthens program sustainability. These findings confirm that community-based health promotion works holistically by simultaneously influencing cognitive, affective, social, and structural factors, so that health behavior changes are not only individual but also collective. Thus, community-based health promotion can be viewed as a relevant and sustainable promotive and preventive strategy for improving the health of rural communities. This study recommends that health program planning and implementation in rural areas place greater emphasis on community empowerment and participation, and tailor interventions to the local social and cultural context to achieve more consistent and long-term changes in preventive health behavior.

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