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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXCLUSIVE BREASTFEEDING AND INFANT GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE WORKING AREA OF THE PEUDADA COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, BIREUEN DISTRICT

Bukhari[1]*, Machfud[2]
[1,2]Universitas Muhammadiyah Mahakarya Aceh / Bireuen
E-mail: bukhari.mj@gmail.com[1]*, machfudazhari@gmail.com[2]

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Abstract

Child growth and development are influenced by internal and external factors. One of the postnatal factors is nutritional factors. Nutritional elements are a dominant influence on child growth, especially in early life until the age of 6 months. The nutrition needed by babies can be met by providing breast milk (ASI). Exclusive breastfeeding is one effort to obtain good baby growth and development because breast milk contains important nutrients needed by babies to grow. The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area, Bireuen Regency. The research design used in this study was cross-sectional. The population in this study were 204 mothers who had babies aged 6-12 months. The sample used in this study was accidental sampling, namely a sampling technique based on chance, the number of samples was 67 babies. This study was conducted at the Peudada Community Health Center on July 14, 2025. Data analysis used the *Chi Square test* . The results of the univariate test showed that the majority of exclusive breastfeeding was in the category of providing exclusive breastfeeding as many as 40 respondents (59.7%), respondents based on appropriate growth as many as 57 respondents (85.1%) and fine and gross motor development in infants showed that 42 respondents (62.7%). The bivariate results using the statistical test above obtained a p value = 0.001. This means that the p value is smaller than α ($p = 0.001 < \alpha = 0.05$) , so it can be said that Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and growth in infants at the Peudada Health Center, Bireuen Regency. Suggestions for mothers should dig up information from health workers, and information media that discuss exclusive breastfeeding so that infant growth and development are met according to age and avoid delays in growth and development.

Keywords: Exclusive Breastfeeding, Growth, Development, Baby

INTRODUCTION

Every family dreams of having a child, and they hope their child will grow and develop optimally, be physically, mentally, and socially healthy, be a source of pride, and be useful to the nation and state. Child development from conception to adulthood is influenced by many factors. These factors include genetics and bio-physiological and psychosocial environmental factors, which can inhibit or optimize child development (Soetjiningsih, 2020). Development is the increase in abilities (skills) in more complex body structures and functions in a regular and predictable pattern, as a result of the maturation process. This stage also includes emotional, intellectual, and behavioral development as a result of interactions with the environment. In monitoring child development, screening and early detection of developmental abnormalities are essential for early diagnosis and recovery (Soetjiningsih, 2020). Child growth and development are influenced by internal and external factors. One of these postnatal factors is nutrition. Nutrition plays a dominant role in child growth, especially in early life up to 6 months of age. A baby's nutritional needs can be met by providing breast milk. Breast milk is the optimal choice for feeding babies because it contains nutrients, hormones, immune factors, growth factors, and anti-inflammatories (Hiddayaturrahmi et al., 2024). Breast milk is the primary nutrient that must be given to babies. It is natural and healthy because it contains various substances needed for growth and development, baby health, and baby immunity. Exclusive breastfeeding is breast milk given to babies and no other additional food for the first six months of life and continued until the age of two years (Sarumi, 2022). The impact of not providing breast milk to babies can seriously affect their health and development. The negative impacts that may be experienced by babies who are not

exclusively breastfed include malnutrition, infectious diseases, risk of death, growth disorders, long-term health problems, and loss of the benefits of emotional bonding (Dahliansyah, 2022). According to the results of research (Panggabean et al., 2024) regarding the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the growth and development of infants aged 0-6 months at the Singgabur Health Center, Sitellu Tali Urang Julu District, Pakpak Bharat Regency, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between breastfeeding and infant growth with the results of the chi squer test, namely p value 0.001 and there is a relationship between breastfeeding and development in infants with the Chi Square test, the results of the p value 0.000 were obtained. The conclusion of this study shows that there is a significant relationship between breastfeeding and the growth and development of infants aged 0-6 months at the Sinnggabur Health Center, Sitellu Tali Urang Julu District, Pakpak Bharat Regency.

Research (Afri, 2019) suggests a relationship between growth and development and a history of exclusive breastfeeding. When given from birth, exclusive breastfeeding offers the necessary, balanced, and sufficient nutrition to enhance a baby's brain development. Children are provided with appropriate, balanced nutrition optimally. If malnutrition is not effectively addressed, it can cause growth and developmental disorders in children and adults, which can persist into adulthood. Meeting a mother's nutritional needs is crucial for healthy growth and development at every stage of her child's development. According to WHO (2021), reporting data on global exclusive breastfeeding, approximately 44% of infants aged 0-6 months worldwide are exclusively breastfed. This has not yet reached the target for exclusive breastfeeding coverage worldwide of 50%. Exclusive breastfeeding is crucial for optimal growth and development, both physically and mentally, and for infant intelligence. Exclusive breastfeeding is the provision of breast milk without any additional food or drink to infants aged 0-6 months, and continued breastfeeding until the age of 2 years. Based on data from the Ministry of Health (2021), the coverage of infants at the provincial level who received exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia was 69.7% while the coverage for the Riau Islands Province was still below the accumulated coverage of exclusive breastfeeding in Indonesia by province, which was 47.3%. Based on data (BPS Aceh, 2023) it shows that in 2020, infants under six (6) months of age who received exclusive breastfeeding were 44.36 % . Meanwhile, exclusive breastfeeding in 2021 was 33.33%, while the global target of the World Health Assembly (*WHA*) is to increase exclusive breastfeeding for infants aged up to 6 months to at least 50 percent by 2025.

Data obtained from the Bireuen Regency Health Office (2023) shows that the number of babies aged 0-6 months is 2,492, while 74% of babies do not receive exclusive breastfeeding. Many factors influence the success of exclusive breastfeeding, namely internal factors (age , knowledge, parity, occupation), external factors (husband and family support), culture, and supporting factors (health workers). Based on the results of data collection that the author obtained through the Medical Records section of the Nutrition Room in the Peudada Health Center Work Area of Bireuen Regency, the number of babies aged 6-12 months from January to December 2024 was 217 babies, while from January to May 2025 it was 176 babies. The main factor causing death in newborns and toddlers is a decrease in the rate of early initiation of breastfeeding and exclusive breastfeeding. Whereas the growth and development of babies are largely determined by the amount of breast milk obtained, including energy and other nutrients contained in breast milk (Soetjiningsih, 2020). The aim of this study was to determine the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development in the Peudada Community Health Center work area, Bireuen Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Exclusive breastfeeding is the milk a baby receives during the breastfeeding process from its mother alone, without additional fluids or solid foods with the exception of fluids or syrups containing vitamins, mineral supplements, or medicines (Dompas, 2021). Exclusive breastfeeding is giving only breast milk to babies until they are 6 months old, without any additional fluids , such as honey, formula, or bananas. Babies can only be introduced to solid foods after they are six months old and breast milk is still given until the baby is 2 years old (Mertasari & Sugandini, 2023). According to Danuatmadja (2023), the benefits of breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, are for babies, mothers, families, countries, and even the world. The most important benefits for babies include : breast milk is the best quality and quantity of nutrition; breast milk can increase immunity; and breast milk can increase intelligence. Growth is a physiological change resulting from the maturation of physical functions that occurs normally in healthy children over time. Growth results in increased body measurements, such as length, weight, and strength, as well as improved nerve function and changes in physical structure (I Gede & Dharma, 2021). The types of anthropometry widely used to determine the nutritional status of toddlers in the community, both in program activities and research, are measurements of body weight (BB), height (TB), and MUAC (Lila). The anthropometric data frequently used are body weight and height, while the indices frequently used to assess

nutritional status are weight for age (BB/A), height for age (TB/A), and weight for height (BB/H) (Soetjiningsih, 2020). Development is the increase in the ability or function of all body organ systems as a result of the increasing maturity of the functions of the body's organ systems (Ni Wayan, 2017). Development is the increase in the ability (skill) of more complex body structures and functions, in a regular and predictable pattern, as a result of the maturation or maturity process (Ns. Rischa Hamdanesti & Ns. Syalvia Oresti, 2021).

According to (Soetjiningsih, 2020) the main factors that influence children's growth and development are generally classified into two:

a. Genetic factors

Genetic factors are the foundation for achieving the final results of a child's growth and development. Through the genetic instructions contained in the fertilized egg, the quantity and quality of growth can be determined. Genetic factors include various normal and pathological inherited factors, gender, ethnicity, family background, age, and genetic disorders.

b. Environmental factors

The environment is a crucial factor in determining whether or not innate potential is achieved. A favorable environment will enable the achievement of innate potential, while a less favorable environment will hinder it. This environment is a "bio-physical-psycho-social" environment that influences individuals every day, from conception to the end of their lives.

METHOD

This research is quantitative with a descriptive analytical research design, namely a research design by conducting an approach and data collection carried out at the same time to study the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development, all measurements of dependent and independent variables that will be studied on the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area, Bireuen Regency. The population in this study were mothers who had babies aged 6-12 months, totaling 204 mothers, and the sample in this study was 67 mothers. Samples and Sampling in this study were carried out using a *non-probability sampling method* , namely a sampling technique that provides equal opportunities for each element or member of the population to be selected as a sample. This sampling technique uses *accidental sampling* , a sampling determination technique, based on chance, so that researchers can take samples from anyone they meet without prior planning and has the following criteria:

1. Inclusion criteria:
   a) Mothers who have children aged 6-12 months
   b) Live in the working area of the Peudada Health Center, Bireuen Regency.
   c) Mother is willing to be a respondent.
2. Exclusion criteria
   a) Mothers who have children aged <6 months
   b) Cannot read and write
   c) Has moved from the Peudada Health Center Work Area, Bireuen Regency

This research was conducted from 10 to 19 July 2025 in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area, Bireuen Regency. *Bivariate analysis* was conducted to determine the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable using the *chi-square test* . This test is conducted to decide whether there is a relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable, then using *the p-value* compared with the error rate (alpha) which is 5% or 0.05 . The results of the *chi-square analysis test* obtained a *p-value* of 0.000 from these results indicating that there is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area, Bireuen Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Peudada Community Health Center is the main community health center in Peudada District, located on the Banda Aceh-Medan road, Gampong Meunasah Pulo, Peudada District, Bireuen Regency. The Peudada Community Health Center area in Bireuen Regency is home to 52 villages.

Table 1. Sample Distribution Data in the Peudada Community Health Center work area, Bireuen Regency

No	Village	Number of Respondents
1	Tunong Mosque	8
2	Blang Kubu	7
3	Kukue	10
4	Meunasah Blang	7
5	Paya	8
6	Mature Reulet	9
7	Mosque	11
8	Teungoh Meunasah	7
	Total	67

The research was conducted in the Peudada Community Health Center working area, data collection was conducted on July 14, 2025 with a total sample of 67 respondents, namely mothers who have babies aged 6-12 months. The data collection process was carried out by giving questionnaires to respondents who had been given an explanation of how to fill them out and were filled out directly by the respondents and the results were immediately collected. The collected data were then analyzed analytically and processed using SPSS for Windows version 24. Then the data was analyzed using the *Chi Square statistical test* .

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics based on infant age and gender in the Peudada Community Health Center work area, Bireuen Regency

Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age		
6-8 Months	29	43.3
9-12 Months	38	56.7
Amount	67	100
Gender		
Man	38	56.7
Woman	29	43.3
Amount	67	100

Table 2 shows that 67 respondents can be seen from the characteristics of the most dominant respondents are 9-12 months old, amounting to 38 respondents (56.7%). The characteristics of respondents in terms of gender are predominantly male, namely 38 respondents (56.7 %).

Table 3. Frequency Distribution based on Breastfeeding in the Work Area Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency

Breastfeeding	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Exclusive Breastfeeding	40	59.7
Non-Exclusive Breastfeeding	27	40.3
Total	67	100

Table 3 explains the characteristics of respondents based on the provision of exclusive breastfeeding, the majority of which are in the category of providing exclusive breastfeeding, as many as 40 respondents (59.7%), and as many as 27 respondents (40.3%) who do not provide exclusive breastfeeding.

Table 4. Frequency Distribution based on Infant Growth in the Work Area

Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency

Growth	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
In accordance	57	85.1
It is not in accordance with	10	14.9
Total	67	100

Table 4.3 explains the characteristics of respondents based on appropriate growth of 57 respondents (85.1 %) and inappropriate growth of 10 respondents (14.9%).

Table 5. Frequency Distribution based on Infant Development in the Work Area Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency

Development	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
In accordance	42	62.7
It is not in accordance with	25	37.3
Total	67	100

Based on table 5, the distribution of respondents regarding fine and gross motor development in infants shows that 42 respondents (62.7%) showed that fine and gross motor development was in accordance with development, 25 respondents (37.3%) showed that fine and gross motor development was not in accordance with development.

Table 6. Frequency Distribution based on Infant Growth in the Work Area Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency

Breastfeeding	Growth				Amount		*P-Value*
	In accordance		It is not in accordance with				
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Exclusive Breastfeeding	39	58.2	1	1.5	40	59.7	
Non-Exclusive Breastfeeding	18	26.9	9	13.4	27	40.3	0.001
Total	**57**	**85.1**	**10**	**14.9**	**67**	**100**	

Table 6 explains that the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area was obtained in infants who were given exclusive breastfeeding had appropriate growth of 39 infants (58.2%), and inappropriate growth of 1 infant (1.5%). While infants who were not given exclusive breastfeeding had appropriate growth of 18 infants (26.9 %), and inappropriate growth of 9 infants (13.4%). Based on the results of the statistical test above, the p value = 0.001 was obtained. This means that the p value is smaller than α (p = 0.001 < α = 0.05) , so it can be said that Ho is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and growth in infants at the Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency.

Table 7. Frequency Distribution based on Infant Development in the Work Area Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency

Breastfeeding	Development				Amount		*P-Value*
	In accordance		It is not in accordance with				
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Exclusive Breastfeeding	31	46.3	9	13.7	40	59.7	
Non-Exclusive Breastfeeding	11	14.4	16	23.9	27	40.3	0.002
Total	**57**	**62.7**	**25**	**37.3**	**67**	**100**	

Table 7 explains that the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant development in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area was obtained in infants who were given exclusive breastfeeding had appropriate development of 31 infants (46.3%), and inappropriate development of 9 infants (13.7%). While infants who were not given exclusive breastfeeding had appropriate development of 11 infants (16.4 %), and inappropriate development of 16 infants (23.9%). Based on the results of the statistical test above, the p value = 0.002 was obtained. This means that the p value is smaller than α (p = 0.002 <α = 0.05) , so it can be said that H0 is rejected and Ha is

accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant development at the Peudada Community Health Center, Bireuen Regency. Based on the results of research in the Peudada Health Center Working Area, it was found that babies who were given exclusive breastfeeding had appropriate growth of 39 babies (58.2%), and inappropriate growth of 1 baby (1.5%). Meanwhile, babies who were not given exclusive breastfeeding had appropriate growth of 18 babies (26.9 %), and inappropriate growth of 9 babies (13.4%). Based on the results of the statistical test above, the p value = 0.001 was obtained. This means that the p value is smaller than α (p = 0.001 > α = 0.05) , so it can be said that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and growth in babies at the Peudada Health Center, Bireuen Regency.

The results of this study are in line with (Afri, 2019) entitled the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the development of toddler -aged children in the working area of the Paccerakkang Community Health Center, Makassar City. The results of the study obtained were that in 15 children who received exclusive breastfeeding, there were 14 children (93.3%) whose growth was normal and 1 child (6.7%) whose growth was abnormal, while 15 children who did not receive exclusive breastfeeding, there were 11 children (73.3%) whose growth was normal and 4 children (26.7%) whose growth was abnormal. The results of the statistical test with Chi-square obtained a value of ρ = 0.021, which means the value of ρ> α (0.05) , so the alternative hypothesis is accepted. The interpretation is that there is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the growth of toddler- aged children in the working area of the Paccerakkang Community Health Center, Makassar City. Infants aged 6-12 months require exclusive breastfeeding to support their growth, which is related to weight and height gain. The nutrients contained in breast milk can influence the growth of infants aged 6-12 months. No matter how expensive or good formula is , the nutritional content of breast milk is still superior. Therefore, mothers are encouraged to strive to exclusively breastfeed their babies until 6 months of age and continue until 24 months of age.

The results of this study are in line with (Ike Dewi Trimurdiani et al., 2023) which showed that 12 babies (27.3%) did not receive exclusive breastfeeding and 32 babies (72.7%) received exclusive breastfeeding; 37 babies (84.1%) experienced normal growth and 7 babies (15.9%) experienced abnormal growth; and 5 babies (41.7%) experienced abnormal growth related to not being given exclusive breastfeeding). Based on the results of this study, there is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the growth of babies aged 7 to 12 months (p-value = 0.004; α = 0.05) . Exclusive breastfeeding has a positive relationship with infant growth. Babies who receive exclusive breastfeeding tend to have normal growth, appropriate weight, and achieve better motor achievements compared to babies who do not receive exclusive breastfeeding. Breast milk provides complete and balanced nutrition to support the physical growth and development of babies. Exclusive breastfeeding is the provision of only breast milk without additional food or drink for infants aged 0-6 months. Infants should be given the opportunity to breastfeed without restrictions on frequency and duration. Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and continued breastfeeding for up to 2 years contributes to providing healthy food with good energy and nutritional quality for children, thus helping to combat hunger and malnutrition (Risneni, 2020).

Researchers assume there is a statistical relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth, but clinically, they found that exclusively breastfed children are more likely to have normal and healthy growth. Therefore, it can be concluded that the better the mother's exclusive breastfeeding practice, the more normal the infant's growth. Based on research that has been conducted in the Peudada Health Center Area, Bireuen Regency, it shows that the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant development is obtained as many as 31 babies (77.5%), who are exclusively breastfed with appropriate development. Meanwhile, among mothers who do not provide exclusive breastfeeding, there are 16 babies (59.3 %) whose development is not appropriate. Based on the results of the statistical test above, the p value is obtained = 0.002. This means that the p value is smaller than α (p = 0.001 <α = 0.05) , so it can be said that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and development in infants at the Peudada Health Center, Bireuen Regency.

The results of this study are in line with (Afri, 2019) explaining that of 29 infants aged 0-6 months who received exclusive breastfeeding, 25 (86.2%) experienced appropriate development, 4 (13.8%) were doubtful, and no deviant development was found. Of the 16 infants who did not receive exclusive breastfeeding, 10 (62.5%) experienced appropriate development, 6 (37.5%) experienced deviant development, while no deviant development was found. The results of the Chi Square test obtained a p value (p <0.05) which means there is a relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and the development of infants aged 0-6 months at the Singgabur Health Center, Sitelu Talil Urang Julu District, Pakpak Bharat Regency. Infants who receive exclusive breastfeeding will get all the advantages of breast milk and their nutritional needs are met optimally. Breast milk is also food for children's brain development. Breast milk contains high cholesterol which is needed for myelination. Likewise, AA and DHA levels are also high in breast milk. Children who receive breast milk have better intelligence than those who do not receive

breast milk (Herlina, 2020). The benefits of breast milk for babies can prevent obesity, diarrhea, respiratory tract infections, otitis media, asthma, diabetes, leukemia, optimize motor, intellectual and emotional development, protect against malnutrition and reduce brutal behavior (Maryunani, 2020). Exclusive breastfeeding has a positive relationship with infant development. Exclusive breastfeeding, which involves giving a baby breast milk without any additional food or drink for the first six months of life, provides significant benefits for a baby's physical, cognitive, and motor development. Researchers assume healthy growth is an essential prerequisite for good physical and mental development. Babies who grow well physically are more likely to achieve developmental milestones appropriate for their age. Optimal health also encompasses physical fitness and mental well-being.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The majority of respondents who gave exclusive breastfeeding were in the category of giving exclusive breastfeeding, with 40 respondents (59.7 %).
2. Based on the corresponding growth of 57 respondents (85.1 %)
3. The characteristics of respondents regarding fine and gross motor development in infants show that 42 respondents (62.7%) had fine and gross motor development in accordance with development, 25 respondents (37.3%) had fine and gross motor development that was not in accordance with development.
4. Based on the results of the statistical test above, the p value = 0.001 was obtained. This means that the p value is smaller than α ($p = 0.001 < \alpha = 0.05$), so it can be said that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and growth in infants at the Peudada Health Center, Bireuen Regency.
5. Based on the results of the statistical test above, the p value = 0.002 was obtained. This means that the p value is smaller than α ($p = 0.001 < \alpha = 0.05$) , so it can be said that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted or there is a significant relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and development in infants at the Peudada Health Center, Bireuen Regency.

Suggested for Researchers; With this research will increase the insight and knowledge of the author, especially the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area, Bireuen Regency. For Respondents, it is hoped that this research will be a contribution and source of scientific reference for respondents about exclusive breastfeeding in general, thus it will become a basic reference in efforts to achieve optimal infant growth and development. For Educational Institutions; Hopefully, this research will be a contribution of knowledge for educational institutions, especially in adding references in the library to complete the research science on "the relationship between exclusive breastfeeding and infant growth and development in the Peudada Community Health Center Working Area, Bireuen Regency". Thus, it can also be used by students to increase insight and basic references to continue more specific research. For Further Research, it is hoped that the results of this research can be the basis and reference for further research theories conducted by subsequent research guided by this research.

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