

Improving the Welfare of the Elderly Through a Healthy Diet

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Abstract

The elderly are a phase of life that is vulnerable to various physical, mental and social health problems. In old age, a healthy diet has an important role in maintaining the well-being of the elderly, as it can help prevent chronic diseases to improve the quality of life, as well as slow down the aging process. This study aims to identify the importance of nutrition and nutritional needs in the elderly, the challenges faced in implementing a healthy diet, and practical steps to overcome common nutritional problems in the elderly. The method used in this study is a literature review that analyzes various sources of literature related to healthy eating for the elderly. The findings in this article suggest that education and support in the implementation of a balanced diet can significantly improve the well-being of the elderly both emotionally and mentally. The conclusion of this study is that the application of a healthy diet based on balanced nutrition and good nutrition education is very important in improving the quality of welfare of the elderly. The importance of a practical approach in educating the elderly and providing more intensive support in overcoming the challenges of managing the diet of the elderly, through the right nutrition strategy, the elderly can maintain their physical and mental health, as well as improve their overall quality of life.

Keywords: elderly welfare; old age; healthy diet; improving well-being

INTRODUCTION

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines the elderly as someone who has entered the age of 60 years and above. Old age is the final stage of adulthood that begins at the age of 60 years and above. The elderly often do not pay attention to their welfare, so the welfare of the elderly is a critical matter that needs to be considered by the government and the surrounding community. The government and the community need to make efforts to improve the welfare of the elderly in order to provide a good quality of life for the elderly. According to Government Regulation Number 43 of 2004, efforts to improve the social welfare of the elderly are a series of activities carried out in a coordinated manner between the government and the community in empowering the elderly, these efforts are expected to help the elderly to continue to carry out social functions and play a fairly active role in the life of the community, nation, and state. The welfare of the elderly is a responsibility between the government and the surrounding community, the government uses policies to improve the welfare of the elderly while the surrounding community helps provide support to improve the emotional well-being of the elderly.

To improve the scope and quality of elderly health services, it is necessary to coordinate across programs and sectors with related parties, as well as involve the elderly themselves, their families, and the community to participate in improving the health and welfare of the elderly in the family or in the community which is a special goal of elderly health services (Ministry of Health, 2016). Although there are already programs from the government to improve the welfare of the elderly, support from the surrounding community has a great influence on the quality of life of the welfare of the elderly.

Malnutrition in the elderly is associated with poor clinical manifestations such as increased risk of infection, prolonged hospitalization, long recovery duration, and increased risk of death (Agarwal et al., 2013). If the welfare of the elderly is not considered, it will trigger an increase in the low level of welfare of the quality of life in the elderly group.

Social welfare in the elderly group can be created through the application of a healthy diet, namely by paying attention to the balance of nutrition and nutrients that enter the body of the elderly. The elderly often do not receive enough attention regarding their nutritional needs from their families or communities, so social and family support is not optimal (Margiyatya et al., 2020). The physical condition of the elderly will experience a decrease in body metabolism, this condition requires special attention and treatment such as managing a healthy diet to get enough nutrition and nutrients. From the above statement, the author decided to review the description of improving the welfare of the elderly group by implementing a healthy diet. The purpose is to determine the effect of the application of a healthy diet on improving community welfare in the elderly group.

METHOD

This study uses a literature review method, which aims to collect, analyze, and synthesize data from various literature sources, such as reference books and the results of previous research. The data obtained through search using google scholar with a publish or perish approach. The search focuses on articles published between 2020 and 2024, with the keyword "elderly welfare". From the search results, 104 articles were found that were relevant to the research topic. After going through a selection process based on the criteria of relevance, quality, and contribution to the topic, only 5 articles were selected to be the basis for discussion. This approach ensures that research is based on valid and relevant sources to provide a comprehensive picture of the well-being of the elderly

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the research obtained will be presented systematically, with the method previously described. The data presented in the form of the following table illustrate the findings that have been obtained and will then be studied and discussed to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

Method	Article Title	Writer	Result
Qualitative Description	The Concept of Healthy Eating in Islamic Views	Lia Afiliani	The results of this study are to discuss healthy eating in Islam based on the verses of the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet PBUH. This research also shows the importance of a healthy diet to prevent eating disorders such as anorexia and bulimia, which are often caused by a lack of attention to the body's nutrient intake.
Qualitative Description	Increasing Cadre Knowledge in Detecting Nutritional Fulfillment of the Elderly	Istiqomah Dwi Andri, Evi Zulfiana, Novia Ludha Arisanti, Reni Eka Saputri	The results of this study explain community service to 45 posyandu cadres to increase knowledge about elderly nutrition through counseling and demonstrations. Evaluation with pre-test and post-test showed an increase in knowledge, with 62% of cadres obtaining scores of 85-95 and 38% of cadres obtaining scores of 95-100.
Qualitative Description	Socialization of Law N0.13 of 1998 concerning the Welfare of the Elderly	Dahlia Dahlia & Anggo Doyoharjo	The results of the socialization activities showed that there was an increase in participants' awareness of the importance of the welfare of the elderly and a better understanding of Law No. 13 of 1998. Participants also showed enthusiasm in applying the information obtained to support the welfare of the elderly in the surrounding environment.
Literary Studies	Social and Cultural Factors Associated with the Incidence of Hypertension: A Literature Review	Yeni Kusuma Dewi, Hadi Pratomo, Tri Karjoso	These results show that social and cultural factors, such as economic status, education level, diet, and habits of the community, have a significant influence on the incidence of hypertension. These factors can also increase the risk of hypertension in individuals, especially in people with unhealthy lifestyle habits.
Quantitative	The Role of Posyandu for the Elderly in Improving the Welfare of the Elderly at the Prosperous Elderly	Dear Nurul Karhama Ilash	The results of this study show that the prosperous elderly posyandu in Pasirmancung Village plays an important role in improving the welfare of the elderly through health counseling, routine checkups, and also the provision

	Posyandu in Pasirmuncang Village		of social services. This activity has succeeded in improving the health and quality of life of the elderly in the region.
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According to Widyanto (2014) the elderly or the elderly who are in the final stage of adulthood or the final stage of adult life, around the age of 60 years and above begins. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the elderly are defined as someone who has entered the age of 60 years and above. Late geriatrics, or often referred to as old age, is a stage of life that typically begins at the age of 60 years or older, depending on the cultural context and definitions used. Old age itself is an individual who undergoes a variety of significant physical, psychological, and social changes, which affect their quality of life. In the elderly, they tend to be less prosperous, both socially and emotionally. As we age, the human body naturally declines in its functions which can affect the quality of life and well-being of the elderly.

According to Sumarmi and Liliek Desmawati (2015), increasing life expectancy and increasing the number of elderly people is one of the successes in social and economic development, but these successes have consequences and responsibilities for the government and the community to pay more serious attention to the elderly. This means that success in increasing the life expectancy of the lasia is a shared responsibility, both from the government through policies and from the community through social support. As we age, the decline in physical condition and body metabolism makes the elderly vulnerable to various diseases, therefore it is necessary to get used to a healthy diet to overcome social welfare problems in the elderly.

The well-being of the elderly is affected by diet, nutrition, and good nutritional factors can help improve mental, emotional, and physical well-being. Research conducted by Ibrahim (2012) on the relationship between factors that affect nutritional needs and nutritional status of the elderly at UPTD Rumoh Seujahtera Geunaseh Sayang Banda Aceh states that the factors that affect the nutritional status of the elderly are physical activity factors, depression factors and mental conditions, treatment factors, disease factors and biological regression factors. From the results of the study, it is known that all of the above factors have a significant influence on the nutritional needs and nutritional status of the elderly. The nutritional needs of the elderly need to be seriously considered. The application of a healthy diet is one of the effective ways to improve the quality of life of the elderly.

According to Aji Budi Darmawan (2013), eating food is a necessity for humans. By eating, humans will get energy to carry out activities and provide immunity in the face of disease. However, foods that taste good on the tongue, if consumed continuously and excessively, will have a bad impact on the health of the body. Although food has a function as a necessity for survival, choosing the right food and paying attention to balanced nutrition can maintain and improve the quality of life in the long term. The nutrients needed by the elderly such as protein, vitamins, and minerals are very high, unfortunately many elderly people face various challenges in implementing a healthy diet.

Malnutrition in the elderly is associated with poor clinical manifestations such as increased risk of infection, prolonged hospitalization, long recovery duration, and increased risk of death (Agarwal et al., 2013). Malnutrition in the elderly does have a big impact on health considering the importance of adequate nutritional and nutrient intake to maintain health in the elderly. When nutrition is not met properly, the immune system will weaken, causing the elderly to be more susceptible to health problems such as infections, diseases with long-term cure, and death. Malnutrition also affects the decline in the quality of life of the elderly. Therefore, the fulfillment of nutrition and adequate nutrition in the elderly is very important.

The elderly have different nutritional needs from the adult group. Therefore, the elderly are

recommended to limit the consumption of sugar, salt, and oil, in addition to reducing the intake of fatty and high-purine foods. The elderly must also consume a sufficient amount of vegetables and fruits (Ministry of Health, 2014). The metabolism of the elderly who undergo changes requires dietary adjustments that are different from other groups of adults. Limiting the consumption of sugar, salt, and oil is essential to prevent chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. The elderly need to reduce fatty and high-purine foods because these foods can trigger diseases such as gout and can also worsen health conditions in the elderly. Seniors are encouraged to consume natural foods such as vegetables and fruits in sufficient amounts, because real foods contain fiber, vitamins, potassium, and minerals that can help with digestive system health, maintain blood pressure stability, and boost immunity.

Measures such as improving accessibility to healthy food, providing proper nutrition education, and promoting an active lifestyle can help reduce the burden of chronic diseases and mental disorders in the population (Setyaningrum & Yanuarita, 2020). This means that when a healthy lifestyle in the form of maintaining a healthy and balanced diet can have a big impact in reducing the risk of disease in the elderly group. The level of welfare of the elderly can be improved by implementing a healthy diet.

CONCLUSION

Increasing life expectancy, which is one of the indicators of the success of social and economic development, also has consequences. This requires serious attention from the government and the surrounding community to support the welfare of the elderly. As they age, their ability to be active often decreases, making them more susceptible to health problems. Malnutrition in the elderly can increase the risk of various chronic diseases and diseases with long-term medications such as hypertension, heart, diabetes, and many more. This article emphasizes the importance of paying attention to good diet and nutrition in the elderly group. With the right dietary adjustments and social support from the surrounding community and government policies, it is hoped that the quality of life of the elderly can improve and they can live a healthy old age.

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