

Implementation of traditional massage “Peuseul” to improve the welfare of pregnant women in Sukamulya Village, Ciamis Regency

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Abstract

Peuseul is a traditional massage practice that has long been used in Sundanese culture to support the well-being of pregnant women. In addition to helping to reduce physical discomfort, such as back pain and leg cramps, the practice also strengthens the spiritual and emotional connection between pregnant women and their communities. However, *Peuseul* is at risk of being lost if it is not preserved and adapted to modern health standards. Therefore, this community service program was designed to preserve, promote, and integrate *Peuseul* into the health care of pregnant women in *Tatar Sunda*, (Sundanese land). This program involved intensive training for local *paraji*, socialization of *Peuseul* benefits in the community, and the provision of free *Peuseul* services for pregnant women. The training was focused on massage techniques, the use of safe herbal herbs, as well as knowledge of the anatomy of pregnancy. Socialization is carried out through community meetings, printed media, and educational videos. The evaluation of the program was conducted through questionnaires and interviews with pregnant women as well as *paraji* (the massage person) to measure the physical and emotional impact of the practice. The results of the program showed the success of *paraji* training in providing safe and effective *Peuseul* services. The socialization increased public awareness about the importance of *Peuseul* in prenatal care. Pregnant women who received *Peuseul* reported improvements in physical and emotional well-being, including a reduction in back pain and anxiety facing childbirth. This program proved that *Peuseul* had a significant value in supporting the health of pregnant women, both physically and emotionally, and could be adapted according to modern health standards.

Keywords: *Peuseul*; Pregnant woman; Traditional massage

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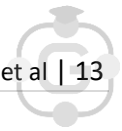
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INTRODUCTION

Kuta Village is an area rich in cultural traditions that has long maintained various traditional health practices that have been passed down from generation to generation. One prominent practice is *Peuseul*, a traditional massage performed by *paraji* (massage persons) for pregnant women. *Peuseul* is not only known as a method to relieve physical discomforts during pregnancy, such as back pain and leg cramps but is also considered to have deep spiritual and emotional meaning. In Sundanese society, *Peuseul* functions as an important part of prenatal care, integrating physical care with emotional and spiritual support. However, along with the development of modernization and changes in lifestyle, the practice of *Peuseul* has begun to be replaced by more modern medical approaches.

Nevertheless, many pregnant women in *Tatar Sunda* (Land of Sundanese) still feel significant benefits from *Peuseul*, both physically and emotionally. This practice offers a holistic approach that is increasingly recognized as important in global health care. On the other hand, many *paraji* still lack knowledge of modern medical standards, which can reduce the effectiveness and safety of this practice. One of the main gaps found is the lack of integration between traditional *Peuseul* practices and modern medical approaches. Although *Peuseul* has great potential to support maternal health, there is a risk that the practice will be further diminished if there is no effort to preserve and develop the practice following current health standards.



In addition, the lack of formal training for *paraji* is also a problem, as they may not fully understand the anatomy and physiology of pregnancy, which are essential to providing safe and effective care. Furthermore, although many pregnant women report benefits from *Peuseul*, there is a lack of scientific evidence documenting these positive effects within a framework that is acceptable to the modern medical community. This hinders wider recognition as part of integrated maternal health care. This gap indicates the need for a more systematic approach to *Peuseul* documenting, preserving, and developing *Peuseul* to keep it relevant and useful in the current health context. With this background, this community service activity was aimed at: 1) Preserving and promoting the *peuseul* tradition as part of maternal health care in Tatar Sunda. 2) Integrating *Peuseul* with modern medical knowledge to improve the effectiveness and safety of this practice. 3) Increasing the capacity and knowledge of *paraji* through training that focuses on pregnancy anatomy, safe massage techniques, and signs of complications that require medical intervention. 4) Increasing community awareness of the importance of holistic and sustainable prenatal care that combines traditional values with medical approaches.

METHODS

This community service program implemented a participatory approach involving various local stakeholders, including *paraji*, pregnant women, community leaders, and health workers. The design of the program was collaborative and adaptive, allowing for adjustments based on the needs and feedback of the community being served.

Training Preparation: *Paraji* Identification

The research team worked with local community leaders to identify *paraji* who actively practice *Peuseul*. Selection was based on experience, reputation, and willingness to participate in the training. Training Module Development: The training module was developed with a focus on a combination of traditional *Peuseul* techniques and modern medical knowledge. Training materials include pregnancy anatomy, safe massage techniques, the use of herbal remedies, and signs of pregnancy complications that require medical referral.

Training Implementation: Theory and Practice Sessions

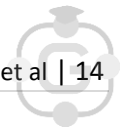
The training was conducted in several sessions that included theory and direct practice. The theory session included an explanation of the anatomy and physiology of pregnancy and signs of health risks to watch out for. The practice session included a demonstration of safe and standard massage techniques, as well as a simulation of handling possible complications. Skills Evaluation: Skills evaluation was carried out through practical tests and group discussions. *Paraji* were asked to practice the techniques that had been taught, which were then evaluated by the training team. Feedback is given directly to improve skills.

Community Socialization and Education: Development of Socialization Materials

Socialization materials in the form of pamphlets, posters, and educational videos were prepared in a language that was easily understood by the local community. These materials contained information about the benefits of *Peuseul*, the importance of prenatal care, and how *Peuseul* could be integrated with modern health services. Information Campaign: Before socialization began, an information campaign was carried out through local media and announcements in public places such as markets and community health centers.

Implementation of Socialization: Community Meetings and Group Discussions

Socialization was carried out through community meetings involving pregnant women, family members, and the general public. Group discussions were held to discuss the community's perceptions and experiences of *Peuseul* and how this practice could be improved and preserved. Demonstration of Practice: During the socialization, the trained *paraji* practiced *Peuseul* under the supervision of the training team so that the community could see first-hand the techniques used and their benefits.



***Peuseul* Services in the Community: Services at *Posyandu* and Maternity Clinics**

Peuseul services were provided free of charge at several *Posyandu* (*Pos Pelayanan Terpadu* – Integrated Services Post) and maternity clinics, with a predetermined schedule. Pregnant women who wish to receive this service could register in advance. Monitoring and Assistance: During the service, the research team and local health workers monitored to ensure that the techniques used were following the standards that had been taught. Assistance was also provided to the *paraji* to handle situations that may require special handling.

Collecting Feedback: Interviews and Questionnaires

Feedback from pregnant women who received *Peuseul* services was collected through in-depth interviews and questionnaires. Questions focused on satisfaction with the service, physical and emotional impacts, and suggestions for improvement. Analysis of Results: The data collected was analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the program and to further understand how *Peuseul* affects the well-being of pregnant women.

Evaluation and Dissemination of Results: Final Assessment

The program was evaluated based on established indicators of success, such as improved *paraji* skills, maternal satisfaction, and increased community knowledge about prenatal care. Report and Recommendations: The evaluation results are summarized in a final report that includes recommendations for future program improvement and sustainability.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The training held for *paraji* in Sukamulya Village went according to plan and was attended by six *paraji* from various villages in Ciamis Regency. The training included theory and practical sessions that were carried out for three days. *Paraji* were given knowledge about pregnancy anatomy, safe massage techniques, and signs of complications that require medical referral. Training Results: As many as 95% of participants reported an increase in understanding of safe massage techniques and the importance of integrating medical knowledge into their traditional practices. Skill evaluation showed that 3 out of 6 *paraji* successfully applied the techniques taught correctly during the practical test.

Community socialization and education Socialization was carried out in Sukamulya Village, involving pregnant women, families, and other community members. Group discussions were facilitated by the community service team and supported by trained *paraji*. The educational materials presented included the benefits of *Peuseul*, the importance of prenatal care, and how to combine traditional practices with modern health services. Socialization Results: 10 pregnant women attended the Sukamulya Village socialization session, with active participation in group discussions. The post-socialization survey showed that 80% of participants had a better understanding of the importance of *Peuseul* and how this practice can support the health of pregnant women.

Peuseul therapy in the community was provided at the Sukamulya *Posyandu*. These services were carried out by trained *paraji*, with supervision from the community service team and local health workers. Each session involved an initial assessment of the pregnant woman's condition, the implementation of *Peuseul*, and post-service monitoring. Service Results: A total of 10 pregnant women received *Peuseul* services during the program period. Of these, 85% reported a significant decrease in physical complaints such as back pain and leg cramps after receiving the service. A total of 90% of pregnant women expressed high satisfaction with the services received, especially due to the integration of traditional practices and medical knowledge applied by the *paraji*.

The results of this activity had an impact on *paraji* and pregnant women. Effectiveness of *Paraji* Training and Skills Improvement The results of the training showed that *paraji* were able to quickly adopt new techniques and knowledge provided during the training sessions. This reflected the willingness and ability of *paraji* to improve their practices, which was critical to ensuring that *Peuseul* could be

implemented safely and effectively in the context of modern prenatal care. This finding is in line with previous literature that emphasizes the importance of ongoing training for traditional practitioners to maintain the relevance and safety of their practices in the modern era (Kartika, 2015).

Increasing community awareness and understanding of the socialization that was carried out succeeded in increasing community awareness of the benefits of *Peuseul* and the importance of holistic prenatal care. Active participation in focus group discussions showed that the community had a high interest in maintaining this practice while also understanding how it could be combined with modern health services. This suggests that with the right information, the community could be more accepting and supportive of the integration between traditional and medical practices, which has also been observed in previous studies in similar contexts (Rahman & Ridwan, 2018). Positive Impact of *Peuseul* Services on the Well-Being of Pregnant Women *Peuseul* services provided in the community showed very positive results, with the majority of pregnant women reporting decreased physical discomfort and increased emotional well-being.

This suggests that *Peuseul*, if carried out appropriately and safely, could provide significant benefits to pregnant women, both physically and emotionally. These positive effects strengthened the argument that traditional practices complemented by modern medical knowledge could play an important role in maternal health care, especially in communities that hold on to their cultural traditions. Challenges and Recommendations for Program Sustainability Although the program has shown very positive results, several challenges were also identified. One was the need to ensure the continuity of training and support for *Paraji* after the program ends. In addition, there is a need for more intensive efforts to reach more communities and increase collaboration with formal health services to ensure that *Peuseul* is recognized and supported as part of integrated maternal health care. Recommendations for sustainability included the development of ongoing training modules as well as advocacy efforts to integrate *Peuseul* into local maternal health policies.

Table 1. Component of activities

Component Program	Indicator	Result
<i>Paraji</i> Training	Participants who master the techniques taught	90% successfully applied the technique
Community Socialization	Increased understanding of <i>Peuseul</i> and prenatal care	80% increased community understanding
<i>Peuseul</i> therapy in the Community	Satisfaction of pregnant women and physical/emotional impacts	85% felt significant physical benefits



Figure 1. Implementation of *Paraji* Training and Socialization Sessions

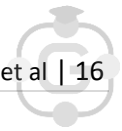


Figure 2. Implementation of *Peuseul* Therapy

CONCLUSION

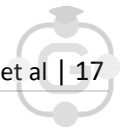
The community service program focused on preserving and developing *Peuseul* practices as part of maternal health care in Sukamulya Village had successfully achieved its stated goals. Through comprehensive training, effective socialization, and provision of services integrated with modern health standards, the program successfully improved the physical and emotional well-being of pregnant women and strengthened the role of *paraji* as relevant and effective traditional health practitioners. Following the success of the community service program focused on preserving and developing *Peuseul* practices, the next agenda is to ensure sustainability and expand the positive impact of this initiative. One key step was to strengthen the capacity of *paraji* through advanced training aimed at enhancing their technical skills and medical knowledge related to maternal care. Additionally, periodic monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to assess the long-term effectiveness of the program. Strengthening collaboration with modern healthcare services, such as local clinics or midwives, was also crucial to integrating *Peuseul* as a complementary healthcare practice that meets safety and modern health standards. On the other hand, community outreach and empowerment should be expanded to neighboring villages to ensure the benefits of *Peuseul* reach a wider population. Campaigns through media, health seminars, and workshops could increase public awareness of the importance of this traditional practice in supporting maternal health. Furthermore, conducting further research on the physical and emotional benefits of *Peuseul* was expected to provide stronger scientific evidence. Publishing these findings will support efforts to preserve *Peuseul* and attract attention from both the medical community and the broader public.

Limitations and Future Direction

The program has made a real contribution to the progress of the community in *Tatar Sunda* by strengthening cultural identity through the preservation of *Peuseul* while improving the health of pregnant women through a more holistic approach. By strengthening the role of traditional healers and increasing community knowledge about prenatal care, the program also helps build sustainable local capacity in maternal and child health.

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Statement and Declarations

The service team declares that there is no conflict of interest related to this research or service program. All activities are carried out in good faith and with the main goal of improving the health and welfare of the community.

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