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Association between husband support, maternal anxiety, and childbirth preparedness among third-trimester pregnant women

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Abstract

Background: Childbirth is often accompanied by psychological challenges, particularly anxiety among women in the third trimester of pregnancy. Elevated maternal anxiety may negatively affect childbirth preparedness and pregnancy outcomes. Husband support has been recognized as an important psychosocial factor that may reduce maternal anxiety and enhance readiness for childbirth. However, evidence regarding the relationship between husband support, anxiety, and childbirth preparedness remains limited in primary healthcare settings.

Purpose: To examine the relationship between husband support, maternal anxiety level, and childbirth preparedness among third-trimester pregnant women.

Methods: A quantitative analytical study with a cross-sectional design was conducted from February to March 2025 at the Cipondoh Public Health Center. A total of 88 third-trimester pregnant women were recruited using purposive sampling based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Data were collected using structured questionnaires assessing husband support, maternal anxiety level, and childbirth preparedness. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' characteristics, while the Chi-square test was performed to determine the associations between husband support, anxiety level, and childbirth preparedness. Statistical significance was established at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Most respondents were aged 21–35 years (83.0%), had completed senior high school education (51.1%), were employed (84.1%), and were primigravida (55.7%). Significant associations were found between husband support and maternal anxiety level ($p < 0.001$), maternal anxiety level and childbirth preparedness ($p < 0.001$), and husband support and childbirth preparedness ($p < 0.001$). Women who received husband support were more likely to experience mild anxiety and demonstrate better preparedness for childbirth than those who did not receive support.

Conclusion: Husband support is significantly associated with lower maternal anxiety and improved childbirth preparedness among third-trimester pregnant women. Strengthening husband involvement during antenatal care may contribute to better maternal psychological well-being and enhance preparedness for childbirth.

Keywords: Childbirth Preparedness; Husband Support; Maternal Anxiety; Pregnancy; Third Trimester.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is a physiological process that begins from conception until the baby is born. During pregnancy, the mother experiences physical, hormonal, psychological, and social changes that require strong adaptation skills. In the third trimester, psychological changes are generally more

pronounced as the mother begins to prepare for childbirth. One psychological problem frequently experienced by pregnant women is anxiety. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 10% of pregnant women and 13% of postpartum women experience mental health

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disorders, particularly anxiety and depression. Furthermore, the global prevalence of anxiety during pregnancy reaches 31%, making it a maternal health issue that requires special attention (World Health Organization, 2022).

Pregnancy is a transformative time in a woman's life, marked by profound physiological and emotional and psychological changes. Although often described as a time of joy and anticipation, pregnancy can also bring with it a variety of stressors that increase the risk of psychological distress in women, including anxiety, depression, and mood swings. These mental health challenges are influenced by various biopsychosocial factors, with social support, particularly from a husband or partner, emerging as one of the most significant protective elements identified in maternal mental health research (Fitriani et al., 2025).

In Indonesia, anxiety among pregnant women remains a significant problem, particularly in the third trimester leading up to delivery. As the due date approaches, mothers tend to experience increased fear and anxiety about the upcoming delivery process. This condition can impact the health of the mother and fetus, as well as the mother's readiness to handle childbirth (Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2013). In Indonesia, anxiety and depression before childbirth have a prevalence of 10-25%, particularly among women aged 20-44. Pregnant women in their final trimester, in particular, exhibit high levels of anxiety, with a prevalence of 33.92%. As labor approaches, maternal anxiety levels vary, with 47.7% experiencing severe anxiety, 16.9% experiencing moderate anxiety, and 35.4% experiencing mild anxiety. This situation highlights the need for greater attention to the psychological aspects of pregnant women facing the labor process (Wisudawati et al., 2023).

The level of anxiety in pregnant women is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include age, education, pregnancy experience, knowledge, and the mother's health. Meanwhile, external factors include socioeconomic conditions, family support, social environment, and husband's support. Husband's support is a crucial factor because the husband is the closest person who accompanies the mother throughout pregnancy and delivery. Support provided in the form of emotional, informational, appreciation,

and instrumental support can help the mother feel more secure, comfortable, and confident, thereby reducing anxiety experienced during pregnancy (Lowdermilk et al., 2019).

If not addressed seriously, anxiety in pregnant women in the third trimester can have negative physical and psychological impacts. If physical condition is not good, it can negatively impact thought processes, mood, and daily actions (Indragiri & Agustin, 2021). Husband's involvement in prenatal care is a relatively new concept in most developing countries. Husbands' participation refers to their roles and responsibilities in reproductive health, as well as the protection they provide to their wives so they can manage difficulties in their sexual and reproductive lives, including during pregnancy (Greenspan et al., 2019).

Husbands' support is expected to provide a sense of calm for the mother, enabling her to experience a smoother labor. Lack of social support from husbands has been shown to be a significant factor in triggering depression during labor. Physical and psychological support from husbands, along with assistance during labor, can positively impact anxiety, pain, and the risk of complications during labor (Heidi et al., 2023). Excessive anxiety in the third trimester can have a negative impact on the labor process, such as inhibiting cervical dilation and prolonging labor time. Therefore, it is important for health workers to provide education and support to pregnant women, especially those outside the optimal reproductive age range, in order to reduce anxiety levels and increase readiness for childbirth (Wardani et al., 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative analytical design using a cross-sectional approach to examine the relationship between husband support, maternal anxiety level, and childbirth preparedness among third-trimester pregnant women. The study was conducted from February to March 2025 at the Cipondoh Public Health Center, Tangerang City, Indonesia.

The target population consisted of all pregnant women in their third trimester who attended antenatal care services at the Cipondoh Public Health Center during the study period. The study included 88 respondents selected using purposive sampling

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according to predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria were pregnant women in the third trimester, willing to participate in the study, able to communicate effectively, and able to complete the study questionnaire. Pregnant women with severe medical or obstetric complications requiring emergency management or those who did not complete the questionnaire were excluded from the study.

Data were collected using structured questionnaires consisting of three sections: respondent characteristics, husband support, maternal anxiety level, and childbirth preparedness. Sociodemographic variables included maternal age, educational level, occupation, and parity. Husband support was assessed based on emotional, informational, instrumental, and appraisal support provided by the husband during pregnancy. Maternal anxiety level and childbirth preparedness were measured using standardized questionnaires

administered during antenatal care visits. Prior to data collection, the research instruments had undergone validity and reliability testing to ensure their appropriateness for data collection.

The independent variable was husband support, while maternal anxiety level and childbirth preparedness were treated as dependent variables. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and study variables using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations as appropriate. Bivariate analysis was performed using the Chi-square test to determine the associations between husband support, maternal anxiety level, and childbirth preparedness. Statistical significance was determined at a 95% confidence level with a significance value of $p < 0.05$. Data analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents (N=88)

Variable	Results
Age (Mean±SD) (Years) (Range)	(28.22±4.79) (18-45)
<20	7/8.0
21-35	73/83.0
>35	8/9.1
Education (n/%)	
Elementary School	8/9.1
Junior High School	13/14.8
Senior High School	45/51.1
Bachelor Degree	22/25.0
Occupation (n/%)	
Employed	74/84.1
Unemployed	14/15.9
Parity (n/%)	
Primigravida	49/55.7
Multigravida	39/44.3

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents. Most participants were aged 21–35 years (83.0%), had completed senior high school education (51.1%), were employed (84.1%), and were primigravida (55.7%).

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Table 2. Relationship between Husband's Support, Anxiety Level, and Childbirth Readiness

Variable	Outcome	Results	p-value
Husband's Support (n/%)			<0.001
Yes	Mild anxiety	26/53.1	<0.001
	Moderate anxiety	21/42.9	
	Severe anxiety	2/4.1	
No	Mild anxiety	0/0.0	
	Moderate anxiety	6/15.4	
	Severe anxiety	33/84.6	
Anxiety Level (n/%)			
Mild	Ready	26/100	
	Not ready	0/0.0	
Moderate	Ready	21/77.8	
	Not ready	6/22.2	
Severe	Ready	2/5.7	
	Not ready	33/94.3	
Husband's Support (n/%)			<0.001
Support	Ready	48/98.0	<0.001
	Not ready	1/2.0	
No support	Ready	1/2.6	
	Not ready	38/97.4	

Tabel 2. Show Pregnant women who received husband support predominantly experienced mild anxiety (53.1%) and were prepared for childbirth (98.0%). In contrast, women who did not receive husband support predominantly experienced severe anxiety (84.6%) and were not prepared for childbirth (97.4%). Furthermore, all women with mild anxiety were prepared for childbirth (100%), whereas most women with severe anxiety were not prepared (94.3%). Chi-square analysis demonstrated statistically significant associations between husband's support and anxiety level, anxiety level and childbirth preparedness, and husband's support and childbirth preparedness all $p < 0.001$.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate a significant relationship between husband's support and the anxiety levels of pregnant women in their third trimester regarding their readiness for childbirth in the Cipondoh Community Health Center (Puskesmas) working area, with a p-value of <0.001 ($p < 0.05$). The

results showed that respondents who received husband's support mostly experienced mild anxiety and were categorized as ready for childbirth. Conversely, respondents who did not receive husband's support mostly experienced severe anxiety and were categorized as unprepared for childbirth.

Husband's support, in the form of attention, motivation, guidance, and emotional support, can provide a sense of security and comfort to pregnant women, thereby reducing anxiety levels during childbirth (Purwoastuti & Walyani, 2017).

These results align with previous research that found that husband's support is associated with anxiety levels in pregnant women approaching childbirth. Husband's support can help mothers feel calmer, more comfortable, and more prepared for the birth process (Hutahaeen & Tarigan, 2019). Other research also indicates that family support, especially from husbands, influences the psychological well-being of pregnant women (Astria, 2009).

The research results indicate a relationship between anxiety levels and readiness for childbirth in

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pregnant women in the third trimester, with a p-value of <0.001 ($p < 0.05$). Pregnant women with mild anxiety levels were mostly considered ready for childbirth, while those with severe anxiety levels were mostly considered unprepared for childbirth. High levels of anxiety can affect a mother's physical and psychological readiness for childbirth (Purwoastuti & Walyani, 2017).

The results of this study align with previous research that found that anxiety in pregnant women is related to readiness for childbirth. Pregnant women with low levels of anxiety tend to be calmer and more prepared for childbirth than those with high levels of anxiety (Astria, 2009). Other research also shows that the higher a pregnant woman's anxiety level, the lower her readiness for childbirth (Lisarsa & Handayani, 2022).

The results of this study indicate a relationship between husband's support and readiness for childbirth in the third trimester of pregnancy, with a p-value of <0.001 ($p < 0.05$). Pregnant women who received husband's support were mostly in the category of being ready for childbirth, while those who did not received husband's support were mostly in the category of not being ready for childbirth. Husband's support can help mothers feel calmer, more confident, and more prepared for childbirth (Purwoastuti & Walyani, 2017).

When experiencing anxiety during childbirth, pregnant women need family support to comfort and reassure them. Despite all the challenges and anxieties, the fear experienced by pregnant women approaching labor can be mitigated by the support of family members who provide reassurance during labor. Family support is essential assistance during labor. This support motivates, comforts, and assists the mother during labor, such as the constant support of a husband and family. This can reduce anxiety (Islamiaty & Suhermi, 2023). Other researchers have suggested that husband support can stimulate a mother's readiness for labor by providing a sense of care and fostering a harmonious bond with the pregnant woman, allowing her to express her feelings to her husband. The presence of a husband during labor can provide a sense of calm and reduce anxiety. Therefore, a supportive relationship with a husband is crucial. The husband's presence by the mother's side can help reduce anxiety (Selamita et al., 2022).

Previous research has shown that husband support is highly beneficial in improving psychological well-being and adjustment, reducing anxiety and stress during pregnancy, and improving and maintaining physical health throughout pregnancy and delivery (Zulfa, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study shows a significant relationship between husband's support and maternal anxiety levels in the third trimester, between anxiety levels and preparedness for childbirth, and between husband's support and preparedness for childbirth in the Cipondoh Community Health Center area. Good husband's support plays a role in reducing anxiety and increasing maternal preparedness for childbirth.

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