

Strengthening Psychological Well-Being and Physical Fitness of Pregnant Women Through Prenatal Happy Yoga

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ABSTRACT

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Pregnancy is a time when a woman's body and emotions go through big changes, which can make her feel more stressed and worried. Even though staying active is good for her health, many pregnant women don't take part in physical activities. This shows that there's a strong need for easy-to-reach, fun, and non-drug treatments that help moms feel better. A community program was created to help pregnant women learn more about their health, get emotional support, and stay fit through a digital yoga program called Prenatal Happy Yoga. The program included 27 pregnant women who were grouped by the trimesters. It had three parts: first, getting ready and checking their health, then having talks about mental health and doing yoga exercises that match each stage of pregnancy, all led by trained instructors. Lastly, they collected feedback from the participants. The program was based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, which looks at how attitudes, what others think, and how easy it is to do something influence healthy choices. The results showed that the women were very involved, loved the sharing sessions, and enjoyed the 50-minute yoga classes. After the program, they had a better understanding of how important it is to keep both their body and mind in balance during pregnancy. Even though there were some small technical problems, the program ran smoothly and shows promise for being used more widely as a digital health and prevention tool for pregnant women.

INTRODUCTION

Pregnancy is an important period in a woman's life and brings about many changes in her body and mind. Changes in hormones, especially estrogen and progesterone, can influence her emotional state. This can lead to feeling unwell and stressed, with symptoms such as mood changes, worry, trouble focusing, and physical issues like headaches (Saragi, 2022). As a pregnancy progresses, women usually go through three different mental stages that match each part of their pregnancy. These stages are influenced by factors such as biology, emotions, and culture, which together shape how each pregnancy feels for the person.

Psychological well-being is a subjective concept and can have different meanings for everyone. A person may experience mental and emotional stress, but if they maintain a stable psychological state, they are better able to face various life challenges adaptively. This psychological well-being not only affects mental health but is also closely linked to a person's physical health (Fagbenro et al., 2018; Hussain & Bhandari, 2025). The results show that an active lifestyle during pregnancy, characterized by high levels of moderate-to high-intensity physical activity and low time spent in sedentary behavior, contributes modestly to improved mental health among pregnant women (Rodriguez-Ayllon et al., 2021). Therefore, maintaining mental health during pregnancy becomes just as important as maintaining physical health.

In the past, pregnant women were often advised to limit physical activity. However, recent scientific research has refuted this assumption. Physical activity has been shown to confer significant benefits for both the mother and the fetus. These benefits include a reduced risk of excessive weight gain, gestational diabetes, and preeclampsia. Physically active pregnant women also tend to have a lower risk of premature birth, fetal growth disorders, miscarriage, complex labor processes, and prolonged postpartum recovery. In addition, physical activity can improve sleep quality, reduce fatigue, stress, anxiety, depression, and low back pain. In fact, some studies have shown a positive association between physical activity during pregnancy and breastfeeding success (Okafor & Goon, 2021).

Recognizing these benefits, several professional organizations, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), have issued recommendations encouraging pregnant women to remain physically active during pregnancy (Birsner & Gyamfi-Bannerman, 2020). However, the reality on the ground indicates that the participation rate in prenatal physical activity remains relatively low. This is influenced by various contextual factors, including cultural, economic, social, political, and environmental conditions. In fact, pregnancy is an opportune time to implement or maintain a healthy lifestyle, while adjusting to physiological changes and fetal needs.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the two main issues requiring attention are changes in the psychological condition of pregnant women, which vary across trimesters, and low participation in overall beneficial physical activity. For this reason, an educational intervention is needed that can address both challenges simultaneously. One form of activity is the Prenatal Happy Yoga program, an approach to physical activity that is safe, enjoyable, and supports the holistic physical and mental balance of pregnant women. This Community Service Activity aims to optimize the physical and mental health of pregnant women through the Prenatal Happy Yoga approach and psychological sharing sessions.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT METHOD

Target Community and Participants

The target community of this service activity consisted of pregnant women participating in the Prenatal Happy Yoga program. A total of 27 pregnant women were included and grouped by gestational age into three categories: Trimester 1 (0-12 weeks), Trimester 2 (13-28 weeks), and Trimester 3 (28-40 weeks). Participant grouping was intended to ensure that the psychological sharing sessions and yoga practices were appropriate to the physical and emotional conditions of each trimester.

Program Design and Implementation Procedures

This community service activity was conducted online via Zoom on November 10, 2024, in commemoration of National Health Day. The program was implemented through three main stages: preparation, implementation, and evaluation. During the preparation stage, the service team developed educational materials for Prenatal Happy Yoga and

designed trimester-specific psychological sharing sessions. Participant screening based on gestational age was conducted to facilitate appropriate group placement.

The implementation stage began with an opening session and participant orientation in the main Zoom room. Participants were then divided into breakout rooms according to trimester to participate in facilitated psychological sharing sessions led by the service team. Following this activity, all participants returned to the main room for a 50-minute Prenatal Happy Yoga practice led by a certified instructor. The session concluded with a closing activity and a reflective “story challenge,” encouraging participants to share their experiences and perceived benefits of the program.

Tools, Materials, and Instruments

The program used digital platforms, including Zoom for synchronous engagement, Prenatal Happy Yoga instructional materials, and guided sharing-session frameworks tailored to each trimester. A certified yoga facilitator led the physical activity component to ensure safety and appropriateness.

Data Collection and Analysis

Program evaluation was conducted using a qualitative approach. Data were collected through observation of participant engagement, interactions during sharing sessions, and responses to the reflective challenge. The data were analyzed descriptively to assess changes in participants' knowledge, awareness, and attitudes toward physical activity and psychological well-being during pregnancy.

Expected Outcomes and Justification

The program was expected to increase participants' awareness of the importance of maintaining physical and emotional balance during pregnancy and to encourage positive health behaviors. The participatory, digitally based approach was designed to enhance the accessibility, engagement, and sustainability of the community service intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Community Service activity entitled Prenatal Happy Yoga, organized by a team of lecturers and students from the Undergraduate Midwifery Study Program, Faculty of Medicine, State University of Surabaya, was successfully conducted online via Zoom on November 10, 2024. The program was implemented smoothly across all stages, including preparation, implementation, and evaluation, in accordance with the predetermined schedule, reflecting effective team coordination and active participant involvement.

A total of 27 pregnant women participated in the activity and were grouped based on gestational age into three breakout rooms: Trimester 1, Trimester 2, and Trimester 3. The activity began with formal opening sessions, including an opening address, singing of the national anthem, a joint prayer, and documentation of the activity. Participants then engaged in trimester-based psychological sharing sessions facilitated by midwifery

lecturers. These sessions encouraged participants to discuss their emotional experiences during pregnancy openly and demonstrated a high level of engagement and interaction.

Following the psychological sharing sessions, participants received an explanation of the basic principles of Prenatal Happy Yoga, including contraindications and correct breathing techniques. Subsequently, participants participated in a guided yoga practice session led by certified instructors. This session lasted approximately 50 minutes and was well received, as evidenced by participants' enthusiasm and active engagement throughout the movements and techniques demonstrated.

The activity concluded with a brief evaluation session and a story-sharing challenge, which invited participants to share their experiences through social media or other platforms as a form of reflection and documentation. Although minor technical issues were encountered, including delays in joining breakout rooms, attendance challenges, and constraints on music arrangements, the overall activity was conducted effectively and achieved its intended outcomes.



Figure 1. Yoga Room Preparation Stage



Figure 2. Preparation Stage for Psychological Sharing Session

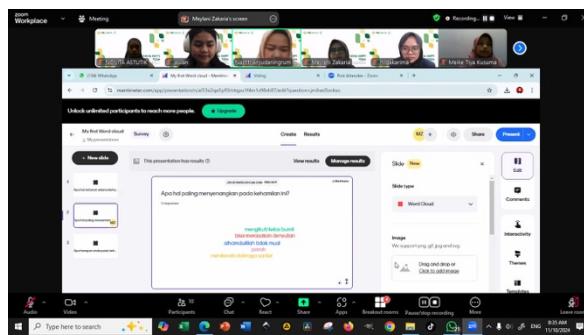


Figure 3. Implementation of Psychological Sharing Sessions

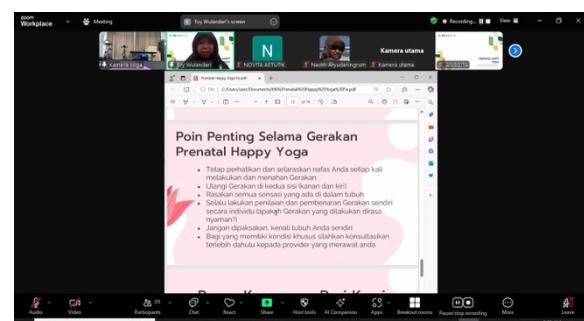


Figure 4. Giving Happy Yoga Prenatal Principal Theory

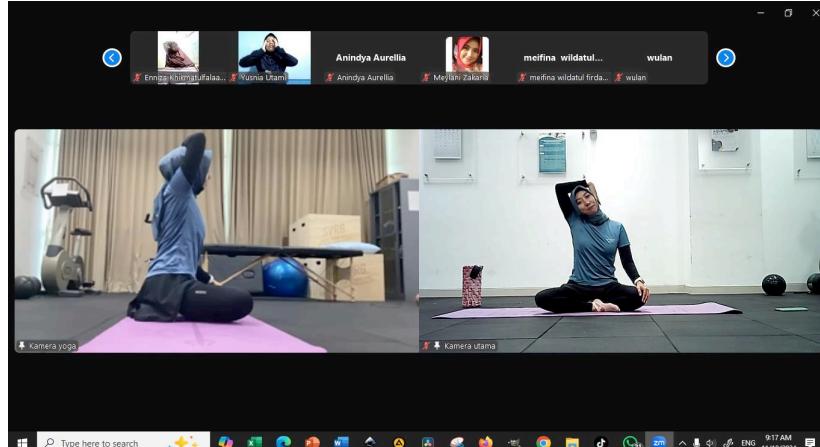


Figure 5. Implementation of Prenatal Happy Yoga

Discussion

Pregnancy as a Critical Period for Maternal and Fetal Health

Pregnancy represents a critical period in a woman's life, as achieving optimal health during this phase is essential for both maternal well-being and fetal development. Physiological changes during pregnancy often encourage women to adopt healthier lifestyle behaviors, including improvements in daily habits and dietary intake. Adequate nutrition, balanced physical activity, and positive health behaviors during pregnancy contribute significantly to maternal health outcomes and fetal growth. Previous studies have shown that pregnant women often increase their awareness of lifestyle modifications and dietary intake patterns as part of efforts to support a healthy

pregnancy (Khusmitha et al., 2023). In this context, community-based interventions such as Prenatal Happy Yoga play a complementary role by reinforcing healthy lifestyle behaviors, promoting physical activity, and supporting psychological balance throughout pregnancy.

Psychological Support and Community Engagement During Pregnancy

The Prenatal Happy Yoga program provided a structured platform for psychological support through trimester-based sharing sessions. Pregnancy is a critical phase characterized by substantial emotional and psychological changes due to hormonal fluctuations, which may increase vulnerability to stress and anxiety. Emotional support, including empathy, trust, attention, and opportunities for self-expression, plays a significant role in stabilizing emotional conditions among pregnant women. The sharing sessions facilitated in this program enabled participants to express emotional concerns and to receive peer and facilitator support, consistent with previous findings that emotional support can effectively reduce anxiety and enhance emotional well-being during pregnancy (Yudani et al., 2022).

Effectiveness of Prenatal Happy Yoga as a Non-Pharmacological Intervention

In addition to psychological support, Prenatal Happy Yoga served as a non-pharmacological intervention aimed at improving physical comfort and mental readiness during pregnancy. Prenatal yoga emphasizes breathing regulation, stretching, and body strengthening, which are beneficial in maintaining physical fitness and preparing pregnant women for childbirth. Previous studies have demonstrated that prenatal yoga reduces common pregnancy-related discomforts and supports both physical and psychological health (Rudin et al., 2022). The high level of participant enthusiasm and active engagement observed during the yoga sessions in this program further indicates the acceptability and feasibility of Prenatal Happy Yoga as a promotive and preventive health strategy.

Behavioral Perspective and Sustainability of the Program

From a behavioral science perspective, the implementation of this community service activity aligns with the Theory of Planned Behavior, which posits that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence health-related behaviors. The positive experiences reported by participants, the supportive social environment fostered during group sessions, and the accessibility of the digital format collectively contributed to favorable behavioral intentions to maintain physical activity and emotional balance during pregnancy. Integrating this theoretical framework within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) allows for the design of community-based interventions that are inclusive, scalable, and sustainable. Such an approach enhances the potential for broader community adoption and long-term impact of similar programs (Sunarto & Winarti, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The Prenatal Happy Yoga activity, conducted online, increased pregnant women's awareness of the importance of maintaining physical and psychological health during pregnancy. The activity's results indicated active participation in emotional sharing

sessions and yoga practices, as well as positive responses to the holistic approach employed. The advantages of this activity include delivering materials tailored to gestational age, involving certified lecturers, and using digital technology to reach participants more widely. However, the activity still encountered several technical obstacles, including delays entering the breakout room, attendance issues, and audio problems during the session. In the future, similar activities can be further developed by integrating more stable digital platforms, increasing participant interactivity, and expanding target reach, so that the benefits of this approach are felt by more pregnant women across various regions.

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