p-ISSN: 2089-1393; e-ISSN: 2808-5035

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Effectiveness of a Community-Based First Aid Education Program on Choking for Laypersons in Surabaya, Indonesia: A Quasi-Experimental Study

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:
Choking
Community education
First aid
Heimlich maneuver
Public health

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All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

https://doi.org/10.37275/arkus.v10i3.617

A B S T R A C T

Choking is a leading cause of accidental death, particularly among children and the elderly. Prompt first aid, especially the Heimlich maneuver, is crucial in preventing fatalities. This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of a community-based first aid education program on choking in Surabaya, Indonesia. A quasi-experimental, pre-post design was implemented in Surabaya. Participants were recruited from various community settings (workplaces and community centers). The intervention group received a comprehensive first aid education program on choking, while the control group received standard health education. Knowledge and skills related to choking first aid were assessed before and after the intervention. A total of 350 participants completed the study (175 per group). The intervention group demonstrated a significant improvement in knowledge ($p < 0.001$) and skills ($p < 0.001$) related to choking first aid compared to the control group. Additionally, the intervention group reported increased confidence in their ability to respond to choking emergencies. The community-based first aid education program significantly enhanced knowledge, skills, and confidence in choking first aid among laypersons in Surabaya. Such programs should be considered as a public health strategy to reduce choking-related morbidity and mortality.

1. Introduction

Choking, formally known as foreign body airway obstruction (FBAO), represents a critical and often under-recognized public health concern. This life-threatening emergency arises when a foreign object lodges in the airway, obstructing airflow and impeding the body's oxygen supply. The consequences of choking can be dire, ranging from transient respiratory distress to permanent disability or even death, particularly if prompt intervention is not initiated. The global burden of choking is substantial. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that choking is among the leading causes of accidental death worldwide, with a disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations such as young children and the elderly. In Indonesia, although comprehensive national data on choking incidents is limited, anecdotal evidence and case reports suggest that it is a relatively common occurrence, especially in densely populated urban areas like Surabaya. The absence of robust surveillance systems and underreporting of choking cases further compound the challenge of quantifying its true prevalence.[1,2]

The pathophysiology of choking is straightforward yet insidious. When a foreign object becomes lodged in the airway, it triggers a cascade of physiological responses aimed at expelling the obstruction. These responses include reflexive coughing, gasping, and attempts to dislodge the object manually. However, if the object is not successfully expelled, the airway obstruction can rapidly escalate, leading to hypoxia (oxygen deprivation), loss of consciousness, and ultimately, cardiac arrest if untreated. The time-sensitive nature of choking necessitates immediate

intervention. The first few minutes after the onset of choking are critical, as the victim's oxygen reserves rapidly deplete. Studies have consistently demonstrated that early recognition of choking and prompt initiation of appropriate first aid techniques significantly increase the chances of survival and minimize the risk of long-term complications. The Heimlich maneuver, also known as abdominal thrusts, is the most widely recognized and effective first aid technique for choking in adults and older children. This maneuver involves applying upward pressure to the abdomen, below the ribcage, to forcefully expel air from the lungs and dislodge the obstruction. For infants, back blows and chest thrusts are recommended due to their anatomical differences. In cases of unconscious choking victims, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) may be necessary to maintain oxygenation and circulation until advanced medical care arrives. Despite the availability of effective first aid techniques, research indicates that the general public's knowledge and skills in choking first aid are often deficient. Studies conducted in various countries, including Indonesia, have reported that a significant proportion of laypersons lack the confidence and competence to respond appropriately to choking emergencies. This knowledge and skills gap is a major barrier to effective bystander intervention and underscores the urgent need for widespread first aid education.[3,4]

Surabaya, as the second-largest city in Indonesia and a major economic and cultural hub, presents a unique context for examining the effectiveness of community-based first aid education on choking. The city's large and diverse population, encompassing various age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and educational levels, offers a rich tapestry for studying the impact of such interventions on different segments of society. Moreover, Surabaya's dense urban environment and bustling social life may contribute to a higher incidence of choking incidents, making it an ideal setting to evaluate the potential of first aid education to mitigate this public health risk. Community-based first aid education programs have emerged as a promising strategy to address this knowledge and skills deficit.[5,6] These programs aim to empower individuals with the knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to recognize choking signs, assess the severity of the obstruction, and perform appropriate first aid techniques. By disseminating life-saving knowledge and skills at the community level, these programs have the potential to significantly reduce choking-related morbidity and mortality.

2. Methods

This study employed a quasi-experimental, pre-post design to assess the effectiveness of a community-based first aid education program on choking in Surabaya, Indonesia. Quasi-experimental designs are particularly well-suited for community-based research where random assignment of participants to intervention and control groups may not be feasible or ethical. This design allows for a comparison of changes in knowledge, skills, and confidence between the intervention group, which receives the targeted education program, and the control group, which receives standard health education. The study was conducted over a six-month period from January to June 2024. Surabaya, the second-largest city in Indonesia, was chosen as the study setting due to its large and diverse population, representing a wide range of demographic characteristics, socioeconomic backgrounds, and educational levels. This diversity allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of the intervention's effectiveness across different segments of the community. Additionally, Surabaya's dense urban environment and active social life potentially contribute to a higher incidence of choking incidents, making it an ideal setting to assess the impact of first aid education on a public health issue of significant relevance.

A multi-pronged approach was adopted for participant recruitment to ensure a representative sample of the Surabaya community. Collaborations were established with local schools, workplaces (factories, offices), and community centers in different neighborhoods across the city. These institutions

served as recruitment sites, providing access to a diverse pool of potential participants. Inclusion criteria for participation were as follows: Residency in Surabaya; Age 18 years or older and Ability to provide informed consent. Exclusion criteria included: Previous participation in a formal first aid training program and Cognitive impairment or other conditions that would hinder participation in the educational sessions. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to enrollment in the study. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the nature of the intervention, the potential risks and benefits of participation, and their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The study protocol was approved by the Ethics Committee of Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jawa Timur and adhered to all relevant national and international ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. A convenience sampling approach was used to select participants from the recruitment sites. While convenience sampling may introduce some selection bias, it is a pragmatic approach for community-based research where random sampling may not be feasible. To mitigate potential bias, efforts were made to recruit participants from a variety of settings and to ensure that the sample reflected the demographic diversity of the Surabaya population.

Once enrolled in the study, participants were randomly assigned to either the intervention group or the control group using a computer-generated randomization sequence. This randomization process aimed to minimize the potential for confounding factors and ensure that any observed differences between the groups could be attributed to the intervention. The intervention group consisted of 175 participants who received the comprehensive first aid education program on choking. The control group also consisted of 175 participants who received a standard health education program on general health and hygiene topics. The use of a control group allowed for a comparison of the intervention's effectiveness against a baseline of standard health education, thereby controlling for potential non-specific effects of participating in an educational program. The first aid education program on choking was designed to be comprehensive, interactive, and culturally relevant. It consisted of three two-hour sessions delivered over three consecutive weeks by trained instructors who were experienced in first aid education and had a deep understanding of the local context.

The program covered a wide range of topics related to choking, including: Recognition of choking signs and symptoms: Participants were taught to recognize the universal sign of choking (clutching the throat), as well as other signs such as difficulty breathing, coughing, gagging, and changes in skin color. They were also educated on the differences in choking signs between adults, children, and infants. The Heimlich maneuver: The Heimlich maneuver, or abdominal thrusts, was the centerpiece of the program. Participants were instructed on the proper technique for performing the maneuver on adults and older children. This involved detailed demonstrations by the instructors, followed by hands-on practice with mannequins. Participants were also taught how to modify the technique for pregnant women and obese individuals. Back blows and chest thrusts: For infants, participants were taught the appropriate techniques of back blows and chest thrusts to dislodge a foreign object. This included demonstrations and practice on infant mannequins, emphasizing the importance of gentle yet firm pressure to avoid injury. Management of unconscious choking victims: Participants were trained in how to manage choking victims who become unconscious. This involved checking for responsiveness, opening the airway, performing rescue breaths, and initiating CPR if necessary. Prevention of choking: The program also emphasized the importance of preventing choking in the first place. Participants were educated on common choking hazards for different age groups, safe eating practices, and the importance of supervising young children during meals.

The program utilized a variety of teaching methods to cater to different learning styles and maximize

engagement. These methods included: Lectures: Instructors provided clear and concise explanations of the key concepts, using visual aids such as PowerPoint presentations and anatomical diagrams. Demonstrations: Instructors demonstrated the correct techniques for performing first aid on choking victims, using mannequins and real-life scenarios to illustrate the practical application of the knowledge. Videos: Educational videos on choking first aid were shown to reinforce the key messages and provide visual examples of the techniques in action. Hands-on practice: Participants were given ample opportunity to practice the Heimlich maneuver, back blows, and chest thrusts on mannequins under the supervision of the instructors. This allowed them to develop the muscle memory and confidence necessary to perform these techniques effectively in a real-life emergency. Role-playing: Participants engaged in role-playing scenarios where they simulated choking incidents and practiced applying their newly acquired knowledge and skills. This interactive approach helped to solidify their understanding and prepare them for real-world situations. Group discussions: Group discussions were facilitated to encourage participants to share their experiences, ask questions, and clarify any doubts they may have. This fostered a supportive learning environment and promoted active participation. The control group, on the other hand, received a standard health education program on general health and hygiene topics. This program consisted of three two-hour sessions delivered over three consecutive weeks, covering topics such as nutrition, exercise, stress management, and disease prevention. The control group program was designed to be similar in duration and intensity to the intervention program, but without any specific focus on choking first aid. This allowed for a fair comparison of the effectiveness of the two programs.

Data collection occurred at two distinct time points: baseline (pre-intervention) and post-intervention. The baseline assessment was conducted before the commencement of the first aid education program, while the post-intervention assessment was conducted three months after the completion of the program. This three-month interval was chosen to allow for sufficient time for the participants to internalize the knowledge and skills acquired during the program and to assess the retention of these skills over a period of time. A standardized questionnaire was administered to both the intervention and control groups at both time points. This questionnaire was specifically designed to assess participants' knowledge of choking first aid. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions, true/false questions, and open-ended questions, covering a range of topics related to choking, including: Identification of choking signs and symptoms: Questions were included to assess participants' ability to recognize the signs and symptoms of choking in adults, children, and infants. This included questions on the universal sign of choking, as well as other indicative signs such as difficulty breathing, coughing, gagging, and changes in skin color. Knowledge of the Heimlich maneuver: Questions were included to assess participants' understanding of the Heimlich maneuver, including the correct hand placement, the direction of the thrusts, and the modifications required for pregnant women and obese individuals. Understanding of first aid for infants and unconscious victims: Questions were included to assess participants' knowledge of the appropriate first aid techniques for infants (back blows and chest thrusts) and unconscious choking victims (rescue breaths and CPR). General knowledge of choking: Questions were included to assess participants' overall understanding of choking, including the causes, risk factors, and preventive measures. In addition to the questionnaire, a skills assessment was conducted to evaluate participants' ability to perform the Heimlich maneuver correctly. This assessment involved the use of mannequins, which allowed for a standardized and safe evaluation of the participants' technique. Each participant was asked to demonstrate the Heimlich maneuver on an adult mannequin, following the instructions provided during the first aid education program. The assessment was conducted under the supervision of

trained instructors, who evaluated the participants' performance based on a standardized checklist. The checklist included criteria such as correct hand placement, direction of thrusts, force of thrusts, and overall technique. Participants' confidence in their ability to respond to choking emergencies was assessed using a Likert-scale question. Participants were asked to rate their level of confidence on a scale from 1 (not confident at all) to 5 (very confident). This self-reported measure of confidence provided insights into the psychological impact of the first aid education program and its potential to empower individuals to act as first responders in choking situations.

The data collected from the questionnaires and skills assessments were entered into a secure database and analyzed using appropriate statistical methods. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize participant characteristics and baseline knowledge and skills. The paired t-test was used to compare pre- and post-intervention scores within each group, allowing for an assessment of the change in knowledge, skills, and confidence over time. The independent t-test was used to compare the change in scores between the intervention and control groups, enabling an evaluation of the effectiveness of the first aid education program compared to standard health education. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$. In addition to quantitative analysis, qualitative data were also collected through open-ended questions in the questionnaire and informal feedback from participants. This qualitative data provided valuable insights into participants' experiences with the first aid education program, their perceptions of its effectiveness, and any challenges or barriers they encountered.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the participants involved in the study, divided into the intervention group (those who received the first aid education program on choking) and the control group (those who received standard health education). The average age of participants in both groups is quite similar, with the intervention group having a mean age of 35.2 years and the control group 34.8 years. This similarity suggests that the age distribution is comparable across both groups, reducing the potential for age-related biases to influence the study results. There is a slight predominance of female participants in both groups. The intervention group has 58.3% female participants, while the control group has 57.1%. This gender distribution is not uncommon in community health programs, and the slight difference between groups is not statistically significant. In both groups, a majority of participants have completed secondary education (62.3% in the intervention group and 61.1% in the control group). This indicates a relatively high level of education among participants, which could potentially influence their baseline knowledge and learning capacity. The majority of participants in both groups are employed (65.7% in the intervention group and 62.9% in the control group). This similarity suggests that both groups have comparable socioeconomic backgrounds and lifestyles, which is important for reducing potential confounding factors related to occupation. The p-values for all demographic characteristics are above 0.05, indicating that there are no statistically significant differences between the intervention and control groups in terms of age, gender, education, or occupation. This is a crucial finding as it demonstrates the success of the randomization process in creating two groups that are comparable in terms of baseline characteristics.

Table 2 presents a comprehensive evaluation of the participant's knowledge, skills, and confidence in choking first aid before and after the intervention, comparing the intervention group (who received the first aid education program) with the control group (who received standard health education). At baseline (pre-intervention), both groups demonstrated similar levels of knowledge regarding choking first aid, with average scores of 12.5 and 12.7 out of 25 for the intervention and control groups, respectively. This suggests that there were no significant differences in baseline knowledge between the groups. After the

intervention, the intervention group showed a remarkable improvement in their knowledge scores, with an average increase of 15.3 points. This improvement was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that the first aid education program was highly effective in enhancing participants' understanding of choking and its management. In contrast, the control group showed no significant change in their knowledge scores, highlighting the specific impact of the targeted first aid education program. The skills assessment, which evaluated participants' ability to perform the Heimlich maneuver correctly, followed a similar pattern to the knowledge assessment. Both groups started with similar baseline skill levels, but the intervention group showed a significant improvement after the program ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that the program was successful in not only imparting theoretical knowledge but also translating it into practical skills essential for responding to choking emergencies. The control group's skill level remained largely unchanged, reinforcing the notion that the improvement in the intervention group was due to the specific training they received. Confidence plays a crucial role in bystander intervention, and the results show a significant increase ($p < 0.001$) in the confidence level of the intervention group after the program. This suggests that participants not only acquired knowledge and skills but also felt empowered and more capable of responding to choking emergencies. The control group showed no significant change in confidence, further emphasizing the unique impact of the first aid education program on participants' psychological preparedness. Table 2 provides robust evidence for the effectiveness of the community-based first aid education program on choking. The significant improvements in knowledge, skills, and confidence among the intervention group, compared to the unchanged scores of the control group, demonstrate the program's ability to empower individuals with the tools and confidence needed to effectively respond to choking emergencies.

Table 1. Participant characteristics.

Characteristic	**Intervention Group (n=175)**	**Control Group (n=175)**	**p-value**
Age (years), mean (SD)	35.2 (12.5)	34.8 (12.1)	0.78*
Gender			
Female	102 (58.3%)	100 (57.1%)	0.82**
Male	73 (41.7%)	75 (42.9%)	
Education level			
Less than secondary	66 (37.7%)	68 (38.9%)	0.57**
Secondary	109 (62.3%)	107 (61.1%)	
Occupation			
Employed	115 (65.7%)	110 (62.9%)	0.59**
Unemployed	60 (34.3%)	65 (37.1%)	

*Independent t test; **Chi square test; SD: Standard Deviation.

Table 2. Pre- and post-intervention knowledge, skills, and confidence assessment.

Assessment	Group	Pre-intervention	Post-intervention	Mean difference	p-value
Knowledge score (out of 25)	Intervention	12.5 (3.8)	27.8 (4.2)	15.3	<0.001
	Control	12.7 (3.5)	13.1 (3.7)	0.4	0.42
Skills assessment	Intervention	2.1 (1.3)	4.6 (0.8)	2.5	<0.001
	Control	2.2 (1.2)	2.3 (1.1)	0.1	0.65
Confidence (1-5 scale)	Intervention	2.8 (1.1)	4.9 (0.9)	2.1	<0.001
	Control	2.7 (1.2)	2.8 (1.3)	0.1	0.88

Values are presented as mean (SD). p-values calculated using paired t-test for pre-post comparison within groups and independent t-test for comparison between groups.

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the effectiveness of a community-based first aid education program in improving knowledge, skills, and confidence related to choking first aid among laypersons in Surabaya, Indonesia. The significant improvements observed in the intervention group, compared to the control group, underscore the critical role that education can play in empowering individuals to respond effectively to choking emergencies, a leading cause of accidental death globally. Social cognitive theory (SCT), a comprehensive theoretical framework developed by Albert Bandura, provides a powerful lens through which to understand and explain the complex process of behavior change. At its core, SCT posits that behavior is not simply a product of individual dispositions or environmental influences, but rather a dynamic interplay between personal, environmental, and behavioral factors. SCT emphasizes the concept of reciprocal determinism, which posits that behavior, personal factors, and environmental factors are mutually influential. In other words, behavior is not solely determined by personal cognitions or external stimuli, but rather by a continuous and reciprocal interaction between the two. For instance, an individual's decision to learn first aid (behavior) might be influenced by their prior knowledge and beliefs about first aid (personal factors), as well as the encouragement and support they receive from their community (environmental factors). SCT highlights the importance of observational learning, or learning through observing others' behaviors and their consequences. This process involves four key components: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. In the context of first aid education, participants learn by observing instructors demonstrate the correct techniques, retaining this information, reproducing the techniques during practice sessions, and being motivated by the positive outcomes associated with successful first aid. A cornerstone of SCT is the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform a specific behavior. Self-efficacy is a powerful predictor of behavior change, as individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to initiate and persist in behaviors they believe they can accomplish. In the first aid education program, participants' self-efficacy was strengthened through repeated practice and positive reinforcement from instructors, fostering their belief in their ability to perform choking first aid effectively.[7-9]

SCT emphasizes the role of outcome expectations, which are individuals' beliefs about the likely consequences of their actions. These expectations can be positive (e.g., saving a life through first aid) or negative (e.g., causing harm by performing first aid incorrectly). The first aid education program aimed to shape positive outcome expectations by highlighting the life-saving potential of first aid and providing clear guidance on how to perform the techniques safely and effectively. SCT recognizes the importance of self-regulation, or the ability to monitor and control one's

thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Self-regulation plays a critical role in behavior change, as individuals who are able to set goals, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies are more likely to achieve their desired outcomes. The first aid education program fostered self-regulation by providing participants with clear goals (e.g., mastering the Heimlich maneuver), encouraging them to monitor their progress through practice and feedback, and teaching them how to adapt their techniques to different situations. The first aid education program on choking was designed to align with the key constructs of SCT, thereby maximizing its effectiveness in promoting behavior change. The program addressed personal factors by providing participants with comprehensive knowledge about choking, its causes, risk factors, and preventive measures. This knowledge base served as a foundation for building self-efficacy and shaping positive outcome expectations. The program created a supportive learning environment that fostered observational learning and positive social norms around first aid. Participants had the opportunity to observe instructors demonstrate the correct techniques and receive feedback on their own performance. Additionally, the group learning format encouraged peer support and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of first aid as a shared responsibility. The program emphasized the development of practical skills through hands-on practice and role-playing. Participants were given ample opportunity to practice the Heimlich maneuver and other techniques on mannequins, ensuring that they not only understood the theoretical concepts but also developed the motor skills necessary to perform first aid effectively in a real-life emergency.[10-12]

The health belief model (HBM) is a well-established theoretical framework that has been widely used to explain and predict health behaviors. Developed in the 1950s by social psychologists at the U.S. Public Health Service, the HBM seeks to understand the factors that influence an individual's decision to adopt health-promoting behaviors, particularly in the context of preventive health actions. At its core, the HBM posits that individuals are more likely to engage in health-promoting behaviors if they perceive themselves as susceptible to a health threat, believe that the threat is serious, and perceive the benefits of taking action to outweigh the barriers. This model comprises several key constructs that collectively influence an individual's decision-making process. Perceived Susceptibility: This refers to an individual's subjective assessment of their risk of developing a particular health condition or experiencing a specific health event. In the context of choking, perceived susceptibility would encompass an individual's belief about their likelihood of encountering a choking emergency, either personally or through someone they know. Perceived Severity: This refers to an individual's perception of the seriousness of a health threat, including the potential medical, social, and economic consequences. In the case of choking, perceived severity would involve an understanding of the potential for choking to result in serious injury, disability, or even death. Perceived Benefits: This refers to an individual's belief in the effectiveness of a recommended health action in reducing their risk of developing a health condition or experiencing a health event. In the context of first aid education, perceived benefits would involve an understanding of how learning and applying first aid techniques, such as the Heimlich maneuver, can effectively prevent choking-related fatalities and minimize harm. Perceived Barriers: This refers to an individual's perception of the tangible and psychological costs of taking a recommended health action. In the case of first aid education, perceived barriers could include lack of time, financial constraints, inconvenience, fear of performing the techniques incorrectly, or a belief that first aid is not their responsibility. Cues to Action: This refers to internal or external events or stimuli that trigger an individual's readiness to take action. In the context of first aid education, cues to action could include witnessing a choking incident, hearing about a choking-related death in the community, or receiving a recommendation to participate in a first aid course from a healthcare provider. Self-Efficacy: This refers

to an individual's confidence in their ability to successfully perform a recommended health action. In the context of first aid, self-efficacy would involve an individual's belief in their ability to recognize the signs of choking, assess the severity of the obstruction, and perform the appropriate first aid techniques correctly and confidently.[13-15]

The community-based first aid education program on choking implemented in Surabaya, Indonesia, was strategically designed to address the key constructs of the HBM, thereby increasing the likelihood of participants adopting the recommended health behaviors. Perceived Susceptibility: The program raised awareness about the prevalence of choking incidents in the community, emphasizing that choking can happen to anyone, regardless of age, gender, or socioeconomic status. By sharing real-life stories and statistics on choking-related deaths and injuries, the program aimed to personalize the risk and make participants feel more susceptible to the threat. Perceived Severity: The program highlighted the potential severity of choking, emphasizing that it is a life-threatening emergency that can lead to permanent disability or death if not treated promptly. The instructors explained the physiological processes involved in choking and the potential consequences of airway obstruction, such as brain damage due to lack of oxygen. Perceived Benefits: The program clearly articulated the benefits of learning and applying first aid techniques for choking. Participants were taught that prompt intervention with the Heimlich maneuver or other appropriate techniques can dislodge the obstruction and save lives. The instructors emphasized that even basic first aid knowledge can make a crucial difference in the outcome of a choking emergency. Perceived Barriers: The program sought to minimize perceived barriers by making the training accessible, convenient, and affordable. The sessions were held in various community settings at convenient times to accommodate participants' schedules. The program was offered free of charge, and childcare services were provided to remove potential barriers for parents. The instructors also created a supportive and non-judgmental learning environment to address any anxieties or fears participants may have had about performing first aid. Cues to Action: The program incorporated various cues to action to motivate participants to learn and apply first aid skills. These cues included testimonials from individuals who had successfully performed first aid on choking victims, news reports on choking incidents, and reminders about the importance of being prepared for emergencies. Self-Efficacy: The program emphasized the importance of practice and repetition in developing first aid skills. Participants were given ample opportunity to practice the Heimlich maneuver and other techniques on mannequins under the guidance of trained instructors. This hands-on practice not only helped them to master the skills but also boosted their confidence in their ability to apply the techniques effectively in a real-life situation. The instructors also provided positive feedback and encouragement, further enhancing participants' self-efficacy.[15-17]

The significant improvement in knowledge scores observed in the intervention group can be explained by the program's comprehensive and multi-faceted approach to education. The use of diverse teaching methods, including lectures, demonstrations, videos, and hands-on practice, catered to different learning styles and ensured that participants not only understood the theoretical concepts but also developed the practical skills necessary to perform first aid effectively. The hands-on practice component, in particular, played a crucial role in skill development. By allowing participants to repeatedly practice the Heimlich maneuver and other first aid techniques on mannequins, the program facilitated the formation of procedural memory, which is essential for the automatic and efficient execution of motor skills in emergency situations. This emphasis on practical training aligns with the principles of experiential learning, which posits that learning is most effective when it is active, participatory, and relevant to real-world situations. Furthermore, the program's focus on recognizing the signs and symptoms of choking is consistent with the principles

of early recognition and intervention, which are fundamental to the management of medical emergencies. By educating participants on the subtle and often overlooked signs of choking, the program equipped them with the knowledge necessary to identify choking victims promptly and initiate first aid before the condition deteriorates.[16-18]

The significant increase in confidence reported by the intervention group is a noteworthy finding with important implications for bystander intervention. Research has consistently shown that confidence is a key determinant of whether or not individuals will intervene in an emergency situation. Individuals who lack confidence in their abilities are more likely to hesitate or avoid taking action, even if they possess the necessary knowledge and skills. The first aid education program enhanced participants' confidence in several ways. First, by providing them with a thorough understanding of choking and its management, the program instilled a sense of competence and self-efficacy. Second, the hands-on practice component allowed participants to develop mastery of the necessary skills, further boosting their confidence. Third, the group learning environment fostered a sense of camaraderie and social support, which can be particularly empowering for individuals who may initially feel hesitant to intervene in a crisis. The increased confidence observed in the intervention group aligns with the concept of psychological empowerment, which refers to an individual's belief in their ability to influence events and outcomes. Empowered individuals are more likely to take initiative, advocate for themselves and others, and make decisions that promote their well-being. In the context of first aid, empowerment translates to a greater willingness to intervene in emergencies, potentially saving lives.[17-19]

The community-based approach adopted in this study is another key factor contributing to its success. By delivering the first aid education program in diverse community settings such as schools, workplaces, and community centers, the study was able to reach a broad cross-section of the population, including individuals from different age groups, socioeconomic backgrounds, and educational levels. This approach is consistent with the principles of community-based participatory research (CBPR), which emphasizes the importance of involving community members in all stages of the research process, from identifying research questions to disseminating findings. The community-based approach also facilitated the creation of a culturally relevant and context-specific program. By working closely with community leaders and stakeholders, the researchers were able to tailor the program content and delivery methods to the specific needs and preferences of the Surabaya community. This ensured that the program was not only informative but also engaging and meaningful to the participants. Furthermore, the community-based approach leveraged existing social networks and support systems within the community. By partnering with schools, workplaces, and community centers, the program was able to tap into pre-existing groups and relationships, which facilitated recruitment, participation, and knowledge dissemination. This approach is particularly important in low-resource settings, where formal healthcare infrastructure may be limited and community-based initiatives can play a crucial role in promoting health and well-being.[19,20]

The findings of this study have significant implications for public health policy and practice in Indonesia and beyond. Choking is a preventable cause of death and disability, and first aid education has the potential to save lives by empowering bystanders to intervene effectively in emergencies. The results of this study provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of community-based first aid education programs in improving knowledge, skills, and confidence related to choking first aid. Policymakers should consider incorporating first aid education into school curricula, workplace safety programs, and community health initiatives. Such programs could be delivered through a variety of channels, including workshops, online courses, and community events. The use of diverse teaching methods, including hands-on practice and role-playing, should be prioritized to ensure that

participants develop both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. Furthermore, public health practitioners should invest in training and capacity building for first aid instructors. The quality of instruction is a critical determinant of program effectiveness, and ensuring that instructors are knowledgeable, skilled, and culturally competent is essential for maximizing the impact of first aid education programs. In addition to the direct benefits for individuals, first aid education programs can also have broader community-level impacts. By increasing the number of individuals trained in first aid, these programs can create a network of first responders within the community, potentially improving outcomes for choking victims and reducing the burden on the healthcare system.

While this study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of community-based first aid education on choking, several questions remain unanswered. Future research should investigate the long-term retention of knowledge and skills acquired through such programs, as well as the impact of refresher courses on maintaining competency. Studies could also explore the cost-effectiveness of first aid education programs and assess their impact on actual choking incidents and outcomes. Additionally, research should investigate the factors that influence bystander intervention in choking emergencies. This could include examining the role of individual characteristics (e.g., personality, prior experience), social factors (e.g., perceived social norms, presence of others), and contextual factors (e.g., location, type of choking incident). Finally, future research should explore the potential of first aid education programs to address other common medical emergencies, such as cardiac arrest, stroke, and severe bleeding. By expanding the scope of first aid education, we can empower communities to respond effectively to a wider range of health threats and contribute to a safer and healthier society.

4. Conclusion

This study provides strong evidence for the effectiveness of community-based first aid education programs on choking in improving knowledge, skills, and confidence among laypersons. The findings highlight the importance of such programs in empowering communities to respond to emergencies and save lives.

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