



Food Taboos and Codes of Conduct for Pregnant Women at Mount Sindoro, Wonosobo District, Central Java, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT Undernourishment is a serious global health issue, threatening 165 million toddlers - ninety percent of them in Asia and Africa - with stunting. Indonesia has one of the highest levels of stunting prevalence, ranking fifth in the world. The people of Mount Sindoro, Central Java, have some of the highest stunting rates. This is caused by many factors, foremost of which is the undernourishment of pregnant women and toddlers. In that context, this paper discusses the food and conduct taboos for pregnant women in the area, as well as the beliefs in the Dieng region. The ethnographic study was conducted between July and October 2017. Data was collected through observation and interviews with 21 informants, including pregnant women, mothers of toddler, health providers, TBA's, cadre and local leaders. Food and conduct taboos for pregnant women are passed from generation to generation. These taboos are linked to labor complications. Food taboos are linked to the consumption of fried rice, durians, jackfruits, pineapples, and sugarcane. Codes of conduct, meanwhile, include carrying *dingo bengle* (*Acorus calamus*, *Zingiber montanum*) when going out, eating from big plates, and smearing the bedroom door with oil, as well as prohibitions against napping, working in the fields, eating spicy foods, grilling food, throwing away garbage, thinking about disabled people, killing animals, and taking newborns outside the house before they are 40 days old. Violation of such taboos and codes of conduct are believed to negatively affect the labor process. The well-established traditions and local culture, as well as the fear of labor complications, influences pregnant women to obey these taboos and codes of conduct.