

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIETARY PATTERNS AND NUTRITIONAL
STATUS OF TODDLERS AGED 3–5 YEARS AT WATUKENONGO
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER, MOJOKERTO REGENCY**

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ABSTRACT

Background : Nutritional status in early childhood is a key indicator for assessing future health quality and developmental potential. Inadequate or imbalanced nutrient intake may lead to growth disorders, increased susceptibility to disease, and impaired cognitive development. **Research Objective :** To examine the relationship between dietary patterns and the nutritional status of children aged 3–5 years in the working area of Watukenongo Public Health Center, Mojokerto. **Research Method :** An analytical observational study with a cross-sectional design was employed. The total population, consisting of 100 children aged 3–5 years, was selected using a total sampling technique. Dietary patterns were assessed using the 2×24-hour food recall method, while nutritional status was determined using the BMI-for-age (BMI/A) index based on WHO Z-Score standards. Data were analyzed using the Spearman Rank correlation test to evaluate the relationship between variables. **Research Result :** The results showed that most children had good dietary patterns (57%) and good nutritional status (57%). The Spearman's rho test produced a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.972$ with $p < 0.001$, indicating a very strong and significant relationship between dietary patterns and nutritional status. These findings demonstrate that adequate and balanced dietary intake plays an essential role in shaping the nutritional status of preschool-aged children. **Conclusion :** This study shows that most toddlers have good dietary patterns and good nutritional status, and it also indicates that regular, varied, and appropriate food intake plays an important role in shaping the nutritional status of children aged 3–5 years.

Keyword : Dietary Pattern, Nutritional Status, Toddler, Food Recall