

## RESEARCH STUDY

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## Food Access of Elderly Women Head Household in Kumpulrejo Salatiga, Indonesia

### Akses Pangan Lansia Perempuan Kepala Keluarga di Kelurahan Kumpulrejo Salatiga, Indonesia

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**Available online at:**<https://ejournal.unair.ac.id/AMNT>**Keywords:**Elderly woman household  
headship, Gender, Food access**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Food security exists when everyone has access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. There are still food-insecure groups at the global and national levels, even though almost every country has already regulated food security. Older women's household headship with physical limitations, the stigma in society, and mainly the patriarchal culture surrounding them create boundaries for them to do various jobs in the domestic and public sphere to fulfill their daily needs.

**Objectives:** By exploring women's intersectionality, this research aimed to seek the narration of the older woman as the head of the household in Kumpulrejo, Salatiga, and how they access their food.

**Methods:** Qualitative method with participatory observation was used to understand more about their activities. Meanwhile, this research also conducted an in-depth interview to gather participants' information. Five elderly female household headship in Kumpulrejo were randomly recruited.

**Results:** Elderly women household headship in Kumpulrejo in their old age still had problems accessing food. However, participants had various strategies for fulfilling daily food, so they were still in good condition. In the social environment, participants still mingle with the community, regardless of age and social status. Participants' ownership of kitchens and clean water still needed to be in better condition, thus increasing the risk of experiencing infections or other diseases.

**Conclusions:** Elderly female households had easy access to food because of their various strategies, such as borrowing from local vegetable vendors to meet their daily food needs.

**INTRODUCTION**

Food security is still a problem that has not been resolved evenly. The existing problems are getting more prominent because of economic inequality, political instability<sup>1</sup>, and gender inequality<sup>2</sup>. In countries with good economies, such as the United States, food insecurity is resolved with additional programs to increase food adequacy, starting by providing easy access, relatively low and nutritious prices, and efficient distribution<sup>3</sup>. The problem of food insecurity in several African states is caused by riots, drought, and government failures that occur simultaneously<sup>4</sup>. Judging from gender inequality, the decision-making process is heavily dominated by men, making women unable to express their food needs and priorities in Nepal. This condition is also supported by the norms and culture prevailing in the patriarchal local community<sup>5</sup>.

Almost all countries in the world have regulated food security for their people. The Food and

Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) states that availability, accessibility, security, and sustainability are mandatory components of food security<sup>6</sup>. Most countries have maintained the stability of existing food security to meet global and national food needs. Unfortunately, this does not guarantee food security at the level of certain groups. The problems of food availability and difficult accessibility have resulted in food insecure groups at the family and individual levels, one of which is the elderly female head of household.

Every individual has the right to food to meet their daily needs. Food security exists when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life<sup>6,7</sup>. However, based on food insecurity groups, each group and individual has limitations in accessing food, such as age and gender. These older women's social, physical, and economic limitations are significant obstacles to accessing food to meet their daily needs.

Aging elderly often experience social exclusion due to age discrimination and changes in roles in the family and society<sup>8</sup>. Aging is often considered outside the social order or loss of independence from an individual, resulting in access to resources, carrying out social interactions, and getting public services to be hampered for every aging individual. Aging results in changes in the sense of taste, changes in appetite, and limited movement of individuals in accessing food to meet their daily needs<sup>9</sup>. According to United Nations (UN) data, there are 703 million people aged 65 years or more worldwide. Globally, the population aged 65 and over increased from 6% in 1990 to 9% in 2019. That proportion is projected to rise further to 16% by 2050<sup>10</sup>.

The position of elderly female heads of household tends to go unnoticed by the public. They are often under constant pressure and are prone to economic problems. The absence of a husband's role forces them to become the head of the family in old age. In addition, discrimination often arises because of the stigma attached to them. Both conditions often place them in conditions of extreme poverty<sup>11,12</sup>.

Based on the phenomenon of food insecurity groups related to elderly female heads of households, there are still limitations to the role of elderly female heads of households in accessing food to meet their daily needs. The dual roles played by elderly female heads of households are minimal from the perspective of age, social, and gender. Older women are generally considered to have domestic work, look after their grandchildren, and enjoy old age at home in peace. Unfortunately, the existing limitations do not release them to work in the domestic and public spheres to meet their daily needs<sup>13</sup>.

According to data from the Salatiga City Social Service for 2018, the number of elderly in Salatiga ranks second in Indonesia and has a composition of elderly in the age category of 45-75 years and over. The total number of older adults is around 60,408, with the proportion of women at 31,862 and men at 28,528 people<sup>14</sup>. The high number of older adults in Salatiga City, especially Argomulyo Sub-District, Kumpulrejo Village, is the basis for selecting locations in this study. The number of older people in Argomulyo has reached 1,155, compared to 267 in the other four sub-districts. Based on preliminary survey data<sup>1</sup>, of the 355 elderly, three older adults were unmarried, 28 widowers, 63 widows, and 261 married people in the Kumpulrejo Village. There are also older adults in the Kumpulrejo Village who have the status of an elderly female head of the family. They live alone or live with children and relatives at home.

Currently, in Indonesia, it is very rare to research food security in elderly female heads of households. There were similar studies but only limited to aspects of older women or female heads of households<sup>15,16</sup>. Research on older women is usually limited to intake related to nutritional status, and female heads of households discuss their role in fulfilling the economy. The purpose of this study was to reveal information on the role of elderly female heads of households in accessing food. Furthermore, this study

also explored the internationalization of the identity of elderly female heads of household and their narrative as an insecure food group that has never been discussed before. The current information is expected to be able to develop further research on food security in food-insecure groups that still exist today.

## METHODS

This research was conducted using qualitative methods with in-depth interview techniques and limited observation of respondents. The data collection procedures used were in-depth interviews, intensive recording, and documenting the activities carried out by respondents in accessing food to meet their daily needs. Interviews were conducted with respondents through questions and answers regarding their daily activities in fulfilling food and the constraints they experienced. The interview process was conducted between respondents to gather information by conducting interviews for 1-2 hours and participating in the respondent's activities for three days by implementing the applicable health protocols. This research was conducted from September 2020 – February 2021 in the Kumpulrejo Village.

The inclusion criteria of this study were: (1) elderly female heads of household who could communicate well, (2) lived or met food needs independently, (3) were not married, (4) did not receive financial assistance from children or relatives on an irregular basis, (5) worked in the informal sphere, (6) were not covered by pension funds, (7) domiciled in Kumpulrejo Village, Salatiga, and (8) willing to be respondents. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria were older women who experienced health problems such as dementia and physical illness. Respondents in this study were five elderly female heads of families randomly selected according to inclusion criteria<sup>17</sup>.

The data collected has been made transcription according to the interviews conducted. The data analysis process was carried out manually using the Microsoft Excel application, then the data transcribed into Excel was coded, made analysis, made data categories, and wrote the results as a whole. This research was approved by the ethical commission of Satya Wacana Christian University (No. 021/COMMIEETICS/EC/IX/2020.)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Elderly Female Head of Family in Kumpulrejo

Most people living in the Kelurahan Kumpulrejo is an older adult. The age classification of the elderly living in Kumpulrejo Village is diverse, ranging from pre-elderly to late-elderly. The age range of the respondents obtained in this study was 46-66 years. Most of the elderly female heads of household who live in the Kumpulrejo Village had middle to lower economic status and lived comfortably and side by side with residents. They live next door to other residents and establish community relationships while maintaining good relations. The position of living side by side makes it easy for them to socialize with other people. In this study, researchers interviewed five elderly female heads of

families who live in the Kumpulrejo Village. Subjects were interviewed regarding access to food carried out daily to meet their food needs. The interviewed elderly have various jobs in fulfilling the economy. Two respondents sell porridge, one sells fried foods, one sells vegetables around, and one works as a housemaid. They work to meet their daily economic needs. Respondents have lived the life of a widow for around 5-10 years due to divorce and death. Even so, they feel they can still live a good life and are given a long life as the head of the family and as a housewife. In their daily activities, three out of five respondents carried out their activities or were assisted by their children and grandchildren who live with them.

Elderly female heads of household respondents have lived alone or with children for many years. They previously worked with their husbands, but now all their needs are fulfilled independently. Respondents revealed that their daily activities were mainly used to fulfill the economy by selling porridge, fried foods, and vegetables or working as domestic helpers (PRT). Even though they enjoy a good life and are given a long life, they still face challenges in fulfilling the economy, limitations in carrying out social activities, and how they access food. After doing work in the public domain, they also must do work at home,

In general, getting old is a necessity that is inevitable for an individual. Getting old also places that individual in a vulnerable state. When faced with changes outside the environment, vulnerability is a feeling of insecurity. Vulnerability can also be caused by physical, socio-economic, and environmental factors that place an individual in danger. Vulnerability in the elderly occurs due to physical limitations, which result in an inability to meet their needs. In addition, the elderly are also susceptible to contracting diseases that affect daily activities<sup>18</sup>. Another discussion related to the vulnerability of the elderly states that chronic diseases often occur and even increase in individuals aged 60 years and over<sup>19</sup>. A similar situation was also experienced by respondents who still had physical problems, such as aching rheumatic pain and non-communicable diseases, which caused their physical condition to weaken. The difference is that the older women in this study must continue to meet their daily needs with their limitations.

#### Daily Activities and Economic Fulfillment

Respondents worked to meet their economic needs in their daily lives. All respondents had problems with declining physical health, which became one of the obstacles to fulfilling these needs. The expression raised by respondents as follows:

"If I have physical problems, I can't walk for too long, I can't anymore, sometimes my chest feels tight."  
(Respondent 1)

"I have problems with my body, if I'm tired sometimes I can't sleep at night, my legs ache, my waist hurts, my feet are so hot. I don't know it's been like this for a long time, I'm sorry I'm old."  
(Respondent 2)

"Grandpa is sick, this pain problem, grandma has diabetes, keeps getting pinched nerves, grandpa's weight 3 months ago was 65 kilograms, now there are only 50 kilograms left because of this illness, and if the current economic constraints, ma'am I'm looking for the money myself, the problem is E's father is no longer there, and the children are now also no longer working. So only grandma is looking for money to live in this house. There are also two family cards in this house."  
(Respondent 3)

The social activities carried out by respondents daily could not be separated from the environment in which they live. Kumpulrejo is an area with a thick culture. The Javanese culture in question is good behavior, attentive behavior such as helping others, caring, and concern which is perceived as a characteristic of Javanese culture according to the nobility of Javanese character<sup>20</sup>. Activities such as gatherings and recitations conducted by the community in the Kumpulrejo Village are still being carried out. All respondents felt the same way regarding gathering activities in the Kumpulrejo environment, and they felt happy when they could gather and interact with other community members. They could also forget a small amount of the economic problems they faced when carrying out these activities. Activities related to religion, such as recitation, and activities that were hanging out and having fun, such as social gatherings, were still being carried out because they were considered to strengthen the intimacy between residents. The respondents admitted that the get-togethers still being carried out today are due to the very familiar Javanese culture. Respondents admitted they had fears if they did not gather at an event held by their neighbors. This condition happened because of gratitude and their position as elderly widows. Elderly female heads of household tend to be stigmatized due to age discrimination, changes in family roles due to widowhood, and exclusion from society<sup>8</sup>. However, this did not occur in this study due to cultural differences. Based on a review of the book "Back Door Java: State Formation and the Domestic in Working Class Java by Jan Newberry" Javanese culture shows that strong community ties are influenced by a habit called Gotong Royong. This activity was realized when salvation took place. Residents helped with the activity. Food is always delivered to residents' homes during these activities as a manifestation of gratitude and friendship between communities<sup>21</sup>. The following are expressions from research respondents:

"Here also, before there was a corona, there were recitation activities almost every night, then there were also social gathering activities, but because there was a corona, it was temporarily stopped. Also here, if it's not Corona, there will be a breakfast event in the

sub-district where people gather together" (Respondent 1).

Elderly female heads of households have a vulnerability that causes them to experience economic problems. This vulnerability can affect the purchasing power of respondents, both in terms of food and other needs. Although there is a theory that aging can also go well, which states that early life risk factors can affect aging, there is an assumption that successful aging is a good aging process because there are no significant diseases, and it can maintain physical and mental functions<sup>22</sup>. The reality in the Kumpulrejo Village shows that aging is still not good, which can directly impact economic and daily activities. The aging process in the elderly causes the elderly to become food insecure due to declining physical health, limited mobility, limited family assistance, inadequate health insurance, not having a steady income, and unexpected expenses<sup>23</sup>. Then this contradicts the principles of the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2019, related to food security, namely food security exists when everyone, at all times, has physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets food needs and food preferences, for an active and healthy life<sup>6</sup>.

On the other hand, the current COVID-19 pandemic has also affected socio-economic activities in all regions, including the Kumpulrejo environment. Respondents admitted that social restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily suspended gathering activities. In addition, this also affected respondents who were selling in terms of economic fulfillment. Most respondents seek economic needs by selling and depend on their daily income. Their profits were very dependent on neighbors who were their buyers. The COVID-19 pandemic has also caused their income to drop by 50%. The following are excerpts from interviews with research respondents:

"Just selling porridge, I don't have anything else to do. If I sell porridge, I get 400,000 gross, if it's clean, it's around 100-150,000. It's not bad, because of this corona I have also reduced my sales, because it's a bit quiet, I usually sell 4 kilograms of porridge, mas, since Corona I've only sold 2 kilograms. If you want to ask your child for money, you don't have the heart to do it (you can't bear it)." (Respondent 2)

The social restrictions also affected the respondent's daily income, and they were forced to reduce the number of goods sold not to lose money. Minimum income made respondents more frugal in meeting their daily needs, including food. Minimal income makes them have limited food choices. This condition was felt even more during the COVID-19 pandemic, which made them eat as little as possible, and some respondents ate leftovers from sales that were not

selling well. This expression was raised by the respondents as follows:

"I don't think it sells out often, so at home the children eat it, right? The used goods that don't run out. Yes, thank God (thank God) the sales run out, you get more money. Sometimes I shop at the itinerant vegetable vendors, the sales are quite complete. If the cost of selling is not certain, the best thing is if you can get a lot of money you can buy fish, buy fish, but if you buy it often, you just have tofu and tempeh and vegetables, that's all. (Respondent 3)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the government tended to help fulfill the food needs of respondents, which distributed food assistance through the Kumpulrejo Village. Most respondents acknowledged that they received assistance in terms of food, such as groceries or cash, which was given regularly once a month. Respondents acknowledged that the social assistance they received helped their food needs. The current sources of social assistance are part of the assistance process from social services regarding the Covid-19 pandemic. Existing assistance was considered to help respondents fulfill food because it can reduce their burden.

Nevertheless, due to the lack of coordination between the RT, RW, and existing social services, one respondent does not get routine monthly assistance in the form of rice. Respondents admit they had not received any assistance, although they still think they were sufficient to meet their needs. The statement was mentioned by the respondent as follows:

"I can't. But my neighbors got rice assistance. But the sub-district official also told me to register to get the help, I registered but still didn't get it, so I just let it go, I still have enough money for shopping, I also just eat alone." (Respondent 2)

During the Covid-19 pandemic, assistance related to food was very often found, such as social assistance from the government to help with food and economic problems due to social restrictions being implemented. Respondents have routinely assisted during the Covid-19 pandemic, but respondents were always grateful for any source of assistance they received. The word gratitude mentioned by the respondent was an expression to cover up their difficult situation. The word gratitude was always mentioned because they are still given life today despite some problems. The existing difficult situation can put respondents on the verge of poor food insecurity, which in turn makes respondents vulnerable to food problems and malnutrition problems.

### Access to Food: Eating and the Fulfillment Process

Accessing food and fulfilling it dramatically influences the distance between the residence and the market. Kumpulrejo Village is an area which is located around 15-20 minutes or 5 km from the Salatiga City market. The community's decision to purchase food at mobile vegetable vendors in Samarinda city states that there are factors that influence people to buy food at mobile vegetable vendors, namely time efficiency when shopping than feeling comfortable because they have subscribed. The prices offered are not much different from market prices<sup>24</sup>. This study also happened in Kumpulrejo Village, where most respondents acknowledged that the lack of good transportation access to the market made them shop at mobile vegetable vendors in the Kumpulrejo neighborhood. Even though the prices were higher, most respondents were happy shopping at mobile vegetable vendors. There were 3-5 itinerant vegetable vendors in Kumpulrejo Village. They came alternately at different hours, starting from 07.00-10.00. Although several vegetable sellers come to the Kumpulrejo Village, they have the same price. This condition makes it easier for people to buy food. In addition, the sellers build a good rapport with customers in the Kumpulrejo Sub-District and have successfully gotten most residents to shop at mobile vegetable vendors. The familiarity that occurs, such as the Kumpulrejo community can order the food they want, and traders have trust in the community by giving debt to people who have economic problems. Respondents admitted that they had subscribed for a long time, and if there were problems with food, some people often went into debt to get food. Easy access to food for most respondents is a good thing because access to food is a mandatory component of food security in society.

"I rarely cook, I usually only cook ½ kilogram of rice, I also give the rice to the cat, because I just eat it myself. But when shopping to sell porridge, I shop at the vegetable vendors around, I rarely buy vegetables at stalls like that, it's even easier, there are also a lot of mobile vegetable vendors, more than 5 usually passing in front of your house. It's also complete with sales, it's still fresh." (Respondent 2)

"Actually, I'm often in trouble, I don't have food, bro, I don't have money either, so I usually owe it to a greengrocer around, bro, I'm already familiar with the problem, but sometimes I'm embarrassed too, so I owe it cheap. At most, 1 or 2 days, if I have the money, I'll pay right away, mas." (Respondent 3)

The community's determination to make food shopping decisions was also influenced by personal factors, including age, profession, and the economic situation experienced by the community<sup>25</sup>. In Kumpulrejo, all respondents are informal workers who

depend on their daily income. This finding also puts them in a difficult position to obtain food. However, this can be anticipated with their strategy to get help from the local RT and RW. The current condition of the elderly in the Kumpulrejo Village is that they are still in a good state of food, they were still able to access food properly, the distance to access them was close due to the presence of various mobile vegetable vendors, then in the current state of the COVID-19 pandemic it has also become an obstacle that exists because it affects their daily income,

### Kitchen Equipment and Clean Water

Owning a kitchen can facilitate all respondents in cooking or preparing daily meals. Kitchen equipment and cleanliness need to be owned to support the cooking process. The cooking process in the kitchen carried out by the respondents varies. The observation results showed that one out of five respondents pays attention to kitchen cleanliness, starting from the ownership of ventilation, appropriate garbage disposals, and water use in the food-washing process. In contrast, other respondents still pay little attention to several aspects. This situation forces them to carry out cooking activities in unfavorable conditions, which can affect the cleanliness of the food that is created.

Kitchen equipment supports the entire process of activities in the kitchen. Regarding the completeness of kitchen equipment, one respondent had complete tools to support the daily sales process. Respondents mentioned the importance of having complete kitchen equipment because it can facilitate the cooking process and preparation for selling. The completeness of the tools was raised because the respondents considered that to carry out the process of selling preparations to meal preparations, respondents and their families felt they had enough tools. However, other respondents have problems with kitchen cleanliness and a lack of existing equipment that interferes with daily cooking due to existing economic problems. They admit that the shortage of equipment was due to their inability to purchase the necessary kitchen equipment. The respondents assumed the tools were incomplete because they felt they lacked them in the cooking process they were undergoing. They also acknowledged that the existing tools were no longer suitable for use and could not support the daily cooking. The following are the respondents' statements regarding kitchen cleanliness and equipment:

"The kitchen is pretty clean. I clean it every day, sometimes the kids help too. I used to owe the cooking utensils, pay it in installments, there were ladies who used to often bring them here, there are also many mothers who make installments like that. So my cooking tools are quite complete." (Respondent 3)

"As for the kitchen utensils, there are some, but they are not complete, just make a minimum, the important thing is that you can cook them for sale,



right? I sometimes sell fried foods too, sell vegetables as well, corn rice with side dishes like that. In the kitchen, it's just like this, bro (dirty and dusty conditions)." (Respondent 5)

The kitchen is synonymous with the food storage area owned by the respondent. According to observations made by researchers, food storage for respondents showed that they still use the kitchen to store food that has been cooked or that is still raw. Even so, respondents had a strategy for storing food ingredients. They cook food that has a long shelf life. However, when cooking food with a short shelf life, they eat it on the same day, so they do not have to store food. Respondents also admitted that they no longer had a good appetite and only had food stocked in instant noodles. The problem of lousy appetite is caused by the condition they feel. They admit they do not have a good appetite because they eat alone.

Regarding storage, all respondents stored raw food on the table, cupboard, or floor. Meanwhile, storing cooked food in a cupboard only lasted two days because they did not have a suitable food storage device. All respondents admitted that they did not have an excellent place to store food due to economic problems. Meanwhile, storing cooked food in a cupboard only lasts for two days. This condition was done because they did not have a suitable food storage device. All respondents admitted that they did not have an excellent place to store food due to economic problems.

Improper storage of food ingredients can affect these foodstuffs' freshness or nutritional content. Besides being able to reduce nutrients, food stored in places where foreign substances should not easily contaminate it can affect the individual's health. Improper storage of food ingredients will make it easy for them to be contaminated with pathogens and make people who consume these foods more likely to get sick and tend to experience more severe illnesses and complications, especially in pregnant women, the elderly, and children<sup>26</sup>. However, the results of this study indicate that the respondents did not have a risk of existing diseases. However, it would be better if they implemented a good food storage process to maintain their and their families' health at home.

Other things about cleanliness and kitchen equipment, such as clean water, are essential in cooking. Respondents have different access and water sources; four used water from PDAM with good hygiene, and one still used well water with poor hygiene. Respondents admit that due to a lack of finances to subscribe to water from PDAM. Even though four of the respondents use water from the PDAM, they ride from neighbors' houses and families who live next door. They get clean water from neighbors by paying jointly to get clean water at home. In the kitchen, water is used to carry out the washing process before cooking food ingredients. In washing vegetables before cooking, the water used is filthy due to repeated water use due to not having running water at home.

Respondents acknowledged that water use must be economical and can only be accommodated in

one place because PDAM water ownership depends on/riding on neighbors next to the house. This condition makes respondents unable to apply food hygiene before cooking. Nevertheless, their high sense of reluctance makes them use water sparingly, even though it has a risk of cross-contamination between food ingredients that were washed using water repeatedly. The following is a conversation regarding the ownership of clean water in the respondent's house Respondents acknowledged that the use of water must be economical and can only be accommodated in one place because PDAM water ownership depends on/riding on neighbors next to the house.

"If I share clean water at my sister's house, I share water and electricity, because my income is not much, so I only pay whatever, I also don't use much water and electricity. (the water is pretty clean, but repeated use for washing vegetables makes the water look cloudy)." (Respondent 5)

Other respondents also still used well water in their homes. The use of well water is used for washing food, washing dishes, and bathing. Respondents admitted they did not have the cost to subscribe to the PDAM. Apart from not having the funds, respondents also admitted that PDAM water often experienced congestion, which made them not want to use PDAM services. The following is an interview related to clean water ownership:

"Yes, only from this well, the problem is that the PDAM pays a lot of money, the neighbors said that the water tends to get stuck, so I just used the well. For normal drinking water, I just boil rainwater, if there's no rain, I usually buy gallons of water like that." (Respondent 2)

The results obtained from interviews with respondents regarding clean water were still a significant problem for the cleanliness of research respondents. This finding was still being carried out with the existing conditions because they still have needs that precede the need for clean water, which was considered necessary by most people. The availability of clean water in households can also affect food security. Poor water quality is of great concern because it can cause malnutrition through diarrheal diseases.<sup>27</sup> The results obtained in this study stated that the respondent lacked clean water and running water. However, the respondent had no complaints of diarrhea or infectious diseases.

In the data collection process, several obstacles were felt in this study related to language differences because most of the respondents used Javanese in their daily interactions. Therefore, the researcher asked for help from a translator from the Javanese tribe to assist in the analysis process. Results obtained. Apart from that, another obstacle that was felt is the existence of the Covid-19 pandemic, such as causing fear from researchers due to fear of contracting or transmitting it

to respondents when conducting in-depth interviews and direct observation because respondents who are elderly will be more susceptible to contracting a disease and some of the respondents did not use masks properly and correctly,

## CONCLUSIONS

This study showed that the respondents still had aging problems that were not good because they still had physical constraints that positioned them in vulnerability. This vulnerability made it difficult for elderly female heads of households in this study to access food. Nevertheless, respondents have a strategy to get food for their daily needs. The strategy was to owe to the vegetable vendors around the house. The elderly female heads of households in this study played a crucial role in accessing food for food needs at home. Living alone or with children, basic food needs as a whole were carried out by respondents. Even with old conditions, respondents still carry out economic fulfillment activities to meet food needs at home. During the Covid-19 pandemic, obtaining food was a little assisted by social assistance provided by the government in the form of staple foods. Life with a high sense of gratitude lived by respondents with a sober life.

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## Conflict of Interest and Funding Disclosure

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