

Determinants of the Nutritional Status of Pre-School Children in an Urban and Peri-Urban Setting: A Case of Kurunegala Municipal Area, Sri Lanka

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A total of 305 children age 3 to <6 years in Kurunegala were surveyed to determine the factors that are associated with nutritional status of pre school children living in urban and peri-urban areas. Mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) and triceps skin fold thickness (TSF) of pre-school children were measured and the nutrient intake was assessed using a 3 day diet diary. A pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect child, maternal, paternal, and household factors affecting child nutrition. A two-day activity recall was used to assess mother time on childcare activities. Blood haemoglobin level was measured from a sub sample of the cohort.

The results showed that boys have a significantly higher birth weight, current weight, height, and body mass index (BMI) while girls have significantly higher TSF. The prevalence of underweight, wasting and stunting in the study cohort is 18.7%, 27.7%, and 2.6% respectively. The prevalence of anaemia was 30.5%. Mean intake of energy, fat, carbohydrate, vitamin C, and percentage of energy derived from carbohydrate and protein were significantly below the recommended dietary allowances (RDA) and calcium, iron, and percentage of energy derived from fat were significantly above the RDA for the total group. The multiple stepwise regression analysis indicated that birth weight, male gender, average care received from mother, educational level of father are positive determinants whereas child morbidity and number of children in the family are negative determinants of the nutritional status of the pre-school children in urban and peri-urban areas in Kurunegala.

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