

ASSESSMENT OF ANTHROPOMETRIC STATUS AND DIETARY DIVERSITY OF UNDER-TWO CHILDREN IN SELECTED DISTRICTS OF JIMMA ZONE, SOUTH WEST ETHIOPIA, MARCH-MAY, 2014: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

ABSTRACT

This is the final abstract of Ms Nejat Kiyak's Master thesis, which she completed in May 2015. It is related to the PhD work of Sirawdink Fikreyesus, Jimma University, Ethiopia, on optimizing the nutritional value of traditional starchy staple foods by upgrading them with dried vegetables, fruits and animal products.

Undernutrition remains a pervasive problem in developing countries, where poverty is a basic determinant contributing to household food insecurity, poor child care, maternal undernutrition, unhealthy environments, and poor health care. The prevalence of chronic malnutrition among under-five children remains persistently high in Ethiopia. According to the last Ethiopian Demographic Health Survey, nearly half (47 percent) of Ethiopian children were stunted, 11 percent wasted, and 38 percent underweight. All ages are at risk of nutritional deficiencies, but the period from pregnancy to two years of age provides a crucial window of opportunity to minimize undernutrition and its adverse effect. It is during this time that proven nutrition interventions can offer children the best chance to survive and reach optimal growth, health and development. This study aims to assess the anthropometric status and dietary diversity of under-two children and identify predictors of nutritional status of under-two children in three districts of Jimma zone, Southwest Ethiopia (namely Dedo, Omo-Nada and Mana). A cross-sectional study was conducted with a total of 558 mothers and their index children aged 0-24. All mothers from selected kebelles were included in the study through simple random sampling technique. Structured interview was conducted and mothers were asked about the socioeconomic, demographic and dietary conditions. Height and weights of under-two children were measured and converted to Z-Scores. A multivariate logistic regression technique was used to analyze the data with 95% CI. Of the 558 children in the study 73 (13.1%), 142 (25.4%) and 54 (9.7%) were underweight, stunted and wasted respectively. Risk factors for stunting include gender, age, place of residence and complementary feeding. Urban children were more likely to be stunted as compared to their rural counterparts and male children were more likely to be stunted as compared to their female counterparts. Majority of children were exclusively breastfed and the diets of children in age group of 7-24 were predominantly based on starchy staples (Atmit) which was poor in nutrient density and the dietary diversity score was extremely low and children did not achieve recommended feeding frequency for their age. There is a high prevalence of stunting among under-two children in Jimma Zone and this is mainly associated with poor complementary feeding practice. So, Complementary feeding improvement should be of highest priority for nutrition of infant and young children because of its crucial role in preventing mortality and enhancing child development.

Key words: Child Nutrition; Socioeconomic Status; Stunting; Dietary Diversity