

FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO STUNTING OF CHILDREN LESS THAN TWO YEARS IN FOOD SECURE REGIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF URBAN AND RURAL UASIN GISHU

Stunting is low height for age with poor brain and physical development. It affects about one fifth of children less than five years globally with Africa having 39% in 2017. Stunting develops during pregnancy and in children 0-23 months due to inadequate nutrition. It results to increased morbidity, mortality, reduced individual output, and predisposes children to chronic illnesses. Some surveys have shown stunted children are found in food secure areas. However there seems to be a major research gap on factors contributing to stunting in such areas more so in Uasin Gishu County. The purpose of this study was to determine the contributors to high prevalence of stunting in children less than two years in Uasin Gishu County. A comparative cross-sectional survey design was used for this study. A sample size of 331 stunted children aged 0-23 months were recruited using multistage, systematic random sampling. The results show more stunted females than males at χ^2 ($P=0.001$) with most of the children cared for by their biological mothers 92% (305/331). More urban children who were less than six months were exclusively breastfed compared to rural children, χ^2 ($P=0.001$). More rural than urban children 6-23 months were still breastfeeding at χ^2 ($P=0.001$). Children who lived in the rural area had a higher dietary diversity score ≥ 4 compared to urban children. Eggs were least fed food for both urban and rural children respectively (13/269:11/88). Rural children had a higher intake of vitamin A rich foods compared to urban children. Sub optimal feeding for the urban children six to twenty three months and rural children less than six months may be a contributing factor for stunting in children who are less than two years of age.

Keywords

Stunting, Children, Foods, Food secure, Nutrition

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Track Classification: Health education and promotion