

FEEDING PRACTICES AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN AGED
12 – 48 MONTHS IN KIPTUILONG LOCATION TAMBACH DIVISION,
KEIYO DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Background: Child nutrition problem due to faulty child feeding practices is widely observed in many parts of different countries. Malnutrition among children is a significant problem in Kenya. Good nutrition in children facilitates adequate growth and good health, hence an essential element in human development. Feeding practices and nutritional status was investigated among children aged 12-48 months in Kiptuilong Location, Tambach Division, Keiyo District, Kenya. The aim of the study was to determine the existing feeding practices and their impact on nutritional status of children.

Objectives: The study objectives were to; identify existing feeding practices, establish household socio-demographic characteristics, establish the extent of household food security and determine nutritional status of children.

Study design: The study was cross-sectional and involved 340 children aged 12-48 months and their caretakers.

Method: Random sampling method was used. Interviewer administered questionnaire was used to gather feeding and dietary practices, socio-demographic and food security data from the respondents. Anthropometric assessment of; height, weight and MUAC of children was also done.

Data analysis: Nutritional assessment by WHO criterion (SD- classification Z-scores) using summary indices of nutritional status: weight-for-age (underweight), weight-for-height (wasting) and height-for-age (stunting) were done. Food composition tables were used to determine food nutrient contents. Normal tests of proportions, chi-square and ANNOVA tests were used to test association between nutritional status and socio-demographic characteristics and feeding practices. Independent sample T-test was used to compare children's nutrient intake with RDA.

Results: The results indicated that majority of children 189 (55.5%) feeding score index was average, 101 (29.8%) low and 50 (14.7%) high, meaning that they were fairly, poorly and well fed respectively. Malnutrition by stunting, wasting and underweight is; 86 (25.3%), 65 (19.1%) and 75 (22.1%) respectively. Nutritional status of poorly fed and well fed children differed significantly ($p < 0.05$). This implies that children, who's feeding and dietary habits were poor, were more likely to be undernourished compared to those whose feeding and dietary habits were good. Children from poor socio-demographic status were 132 (38.8%), while those of average and high were 168 (49.4%) and 40 (11.8%) respectively. Socio-demographic status of parents, household food security and feeding practices of children was significant to nutritional status of children ($p = 0.001$). This means that poor socio-demographic status and household food insecurity were more likely to have negative affect on feeding and dietary practices among children contributing to poor nutritional status of children manifested. Children's mean caloric, protein and vitamin A intake was significantly below the RDA and showed a significant correlation with nutritional status of children ($t = 13.273$; $p = 0.000$).

Conclusion and Recommendation: Results of the study showed that feeding practices were significantly associated with under nutrition in children. Poor socio-economic status of the community negatively affected feeding and dietary practices, resulting in poor nutritional status of children. Its recommended that means of promoting appropriate feeding practices and improving household food supply among Kiptuilong people is addressed.