ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Community Food Systems and The Nutritional Status of Children 6-24 Months in Obunga Slums, Kisumu Kenya: A Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract

Kenya is grappling with many public health problems; one of the most critical is childhood malnutrition. Underweight rates are 11%, stunting at 26%, and wasting at 4%. In Obunga slums, stunting was 40.2% for children below sixty months, underweight at 10.2%, and wasting at 9%. Globally, children between 6-24 months have the highest contribution to malnutrition among under-fives. Nevertheless, after 24 months, stunting, an indicator of chronic malnutrition, is irreversible. Obunga slums, compared to other slums in Kenya, registered the highest levels of stunting at 40.5%, despite various interventions. Some of the risk factors that recurrently exist as determinants of nutritional status in urban slums are socio-demographic factors. Other potential factors which seem to be ignored are the food systems-related socio-demographics, which seem to be in constant aetiology. This study determined the relationship between food systems, socio-demographic factors, and the nutritional status of children between 6-24 months. Specifically, to assess the nutritional status and determine the relationship between the community food system and nutritional status. A cross-sectional design was adopted, and households with a child aged 6-24 months in Obunga slums were included. A sample of 189 children was selected through a simple random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used to collect data on community food systems. The anthropometric assessment was used to collect data on the nutritional status of the children. Data analysis was done through descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression. The results reveal that the study had 189 children, 108 males and 81 females. Prevalence of wasting was at 3.2%, overweight at 6.9%, stunting at 27.0%, and underweight at 7.4%. Community Food Systems; wasting was associated with the frequency of buying foods from hotels/restaurants (O.R. = 0.32, C.I. =0.219 – 0.934) and consumption of food from restaurants and hotels (A.O.R = 14.522, C.I. =1.390 -151.712). Stunting was associated with purchasing food from restaurants/hotels (O.R. 0.0134, C.I. =0.020 -0.904. This study enumerated insight that may allow appropriate intervention programs to help align community food systems and mitigate child malnutrition in Obunga slums and other urban slums.

Keywords; Community Food Systems, Nutritional Status, Urban Slums, Stunting