

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Nutritional Status and Risk Factors for Malnutrition among Under Five Children in Merti ward, Isiolo County, Kenya

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Abstract

Malnutrition is a significant public health issue affecting under-five children in many developing countries, including Kenya. This mixed-methods study aimed to assess the nutritional status and risk of malnutrition among under-five children in Isiolo County, Kenya. The study used a cross-sectional design and purposive sampling technique to recruit 384 participants, and data collected on socio-demographic characteristics, dietary practices, and nutritional status informed the development of appropriate interventions to address malnutrition in this region. The study found a high prevalence of global acute malnutrition (17%), underweight (14.6%), stunting (15.9%), and low nutrient intake among children under five. The study also found a low rate of exclusive breastfeeding and late introduction of solid foods, highlighting the need for interventions that promote and support appropriate feeding practices for infants and young children in this population. Additionally, the study identified poor water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) practices in Isiolo, Kenya, with a significant number of households lacking access to proper sanitation facilities and not treating their drinking water before consumption. The findings highlight the need for urgent interventions that target poverty reduction, food security, access to healthcare, and improved living conditions of households to improve the nutritional status of under-five children in Isiolo, Kenya. Additionally, interventions are needed to improve access to proper sanitation facilities, promote safe kitchen waste disposal methods, and encourage proper water treatment and handwashing practices to prevent the spread of diseases in this population. The study's findings provide valuable insights into the nutritional status and risk of malnutrition among under-five children in Isiolo County and inform the development of appropriate interventions to address malnutrition in this region.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Under-five children, Nutritional status, WASH practices, Kenya