

DISENTANGLING THE INFLUENCE OF MATERNAL FACTORS ON NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF CHILDREN: COMMUNITY BASED STUDY IN AN URBAN SLUM OF INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Malnutrition is the major problem in developing countries especially in underserved areas such as urban slums. Most slum dwellers in India belong to the category of permanent necessitation, which are forced to live in the existing eco-cultured situations on account of poverty and social discard. Being the most vulnerable segment of the community the preschoolers (1-6 years) are at the greatest risk of malnutrition because of their growing period that demands high intake of protein and calories. The present community based longitudinal study was carried to assess the influence of maternal factors on nutritional status of urban slum children. It was conducted during January 2010 to June 2010 at urban slum of Cheetah Community, Mumbai, India. Total 190 children registered under six Anganwadis were included. The information was gathered by personal interview of mothers using semi-structured questionnaires. Out of 190 children 102 (53.7%) were malnourished. Significant association was seen between nutritional status of children and various maternal factors like mother's education, birth weight of baby, duration of exclusive breast feeding, time of initiation of breast feeding, sanitation practices in house, knowledge of mother's education about child's nutrition, immunization status of children and socioeconomic status of family. Thus, mother should be properly educated about the nutritional needs of the growing children and importance of complete immunization. Importance of exclusive breastfeeding, timely weaning and provision of protein and energy dense complementary food should be stressed. Mothers should be taught regarding the treatment of the common ailments in the house such as diarrhoea using homemade ORS.

KEYWORDS: Immunization, Malnutrition, Maternal Factors, Urban Slum