

Abstract

Nutritional status of children is an indicator of nutritional profile of the entire community. A cross sectional study was done to obtain an accurate assessment of the nutritional status of the children in Kalpitiya Divisional Secretary Division of Puttalam district of Sri Lanka, Which identified nearly half of the population below the poverty line. A representative study sample of 1000 children age between 2 to 5 years was selected based on the target population. Objective of the study was to find out the nutritional status of 2 to 5 year old children of the area and predict the possible causes related to that. Anthropometric measurements of weight, height, mid upper arm circumference (MUAC) were taken from 1000 children and haemoglobin concentration was measured from 403 children of particular age category. A general questionnaire was used to collect data regarding related variables, such as socio demographic data, ethnic group, breast feeding practices, birth weight, parent's age and educational level and regarding before the day meal pattern. WHO standards were used for analysis of anthropometric measurements and Hb concentration of 11.0g/dL was used as cut off to estimate prevalence of anaemia. The prevalence of wasting, stunting, underweight, low MUAC-for-age and aneamia was estimated as 15.8%, 26.9%, 28.4%, 8.2% and 56.6% respectively. There were no significant difference of prevalence among different age groups and gender except among ethnic groups. We estimated that, acute and chronic malnutrition is a serious pubic health problem among 2 to 5 year old children with severe anaemic condition in Kalpitiya.