

Dietary Intake and Socioeconomic Factors among a Group of Stunted Preschool Children in Cairo

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ABSTRACT

*The optimal growth and development of infants and young children are fundamental for their future. Stunting is one of the most important public health problems in developing countries. This study explores the socioeconomic determinants of stunting among a sample of under-five years children. **Subjects & Methods:** This study is a cross sectional descriptive one for which the study population was recruited from out patients clinic of stunting in National Nutrition Institute (NNI) after taking the ethical agreements of their parents. The study included 50 preschool children (31 boys and 19 girls). Their age ranged from 2-5 year both boys and girls was included. Their parents were interviewed by using special questionnaire for assessment of the socioeconomic factors. Anthropometric measurements were performed. Dietary Assessment was performed using 24H, recall and food frequency of selected food items. **Results:** Among the sample, the children were 62% boys and 38% girls. The current data showed inadequate dietary intake, as there was unsafe level of consumption of total calories and carbohydrate, vitamin A, calcium, zinc, unaccepted level of consumption of protein and iron. The most important determinable socioeconomic factors of stunting were educational level, occupation, family size and family income. **Conclusion:** This study was successful in identifying priority nutrients for dietary intervention including total caloric intake, macro and some micronutrients This study also determine some of socioeconomic factors of stunting which were educational level, occupation, family size and family income.*

Key words: *stunting – preschool children - socioeconomic factors – nutritional status*

INTRODUCTION

Child growth is internationally recognized as an important indicator of nutritional status and health in populations. Stunting (low height-for-age) is acknowledged as the best indicator for child growth (**WHO, 2007**). Stunting refers to a child who is too short for his or her age. Stunting is the failure to grow both physically and cognitively and is the result of chronic or recurrent malnutrition. The devastating effects of stunting can last a lifetime (**UNICEF/WHO, 2017**).

Stunting results from long-term nutritional deprivation, inadequate childcare and poor environmental and socio-cultural conditions. (**Black et al., 2008**) Child malnutrition is estimated to be the largest contributor to global burden of disease, killing millions of children in the developing countries (**Black, et al., 2003**). Some children suffer from more than one form of malnutrition – such as stunting and overweight or stunting and wasting (**UNICEF/WHO,**

2017). Stunting associated with delayed mental development, poor educational achievement and reduced intellectual capacity, it is a strong predictor of human capital and social progress and increased risk of chronic diseases (**Pongou, et al., 2006 and Grantham-McGregor, et al., 2007**). Three out of ten Egyptian children under the age of five are stunted, of these three, at least one is severely stunted. (**Public Health, Human Development, Social Justice, 2012**).

The most significant predictors of stunting low socioeconomic status (SES) include paternal education, family income, paternal occupation and poor access to health services (**Masanja, et al., 2005**). Crowded housing and living place. Large family size. Most studies of the SES emphasize the importance of maternal education, (**Health Policy Plan 2005**) and household wealth or income estimated by ownership of consumer durables (**Bollen. et al., 2001**) provision of household

water and sanitation services (**Pongou, et al., 2006**).

More recent studies needed for the investigation of both social and economic aspects of on stunting, hence the construction of the present study

Objectives

1- Assessing dietary intake of the sample of preschool children's.

2- Find the relation between dietary intake and dietary recommendation for preschool children's of stunting among a sample of under-five Years toddlers

3-Explores the socio-economic determinants of a sample of under-five Years toddlers

4- Identify potential areas of high priority for nutrition intervention.

SUBJECTS and METHODS

Stunted preschool children⁵⁰ of both sexes of stunted preschool children, their age ranged between 2 and 5 years from stunting out patient clinic

of NNI. The study duration were 10 months from, August 2016 till may 2017. The participants were diagnosed as stunted based mainly on WHO standardized methods of assessment of nutritional status 2007(**WHO, 2007**).

1. Questionnaire of stunting clinic

All the cases were subjected to interview questionnaire of the stunting clinic.

2-Anthropometric Measurements

Weight and height was recorded according to the standardized methods (**WHO, 2007**). Height for age was used as indicator of stunting it is categorized as: Normal (-2 to +2SD), Short stature <-2SD, and Tall if >+2SD.

Assessment of Body Mass Index for age:

For age from 2-5 years old, the Z score body mass index was used for boys and girls. The following categories of weight status were determined according to WHO Z score body mass index growth chart reference for

children (2-5-years old) released by **WHO in 2007**.

BMI was categorized as: Normal (>-2 to $<+1$), Over weight ($>+1$ SD), Obese ($>+2SD$) and Thinness (<-2 SD)

3-Dietary assessment:

Data on nutritional status had been collected using specially designed questionnaires to cover required information on: Food intake (24 hours recall), and Dietary pattern “Food frequency” for selected items.

The energy and nutrient content of the 24 hour was computed through the compiled food composition tables of the **NNI (2006)**.

Dietary adequacy:

The nutritional value of foods items consumed was compared to the recommended dietary allowances “RDAs” of **FAO/WHO/UNU (2004)**.

Iron estimation was based on its bioavailability according to the daily diet content of heam iron source in grams (meat, poultry and fish) or ascorbic acid (mg) as follows:

Low bioavailability: <30 gm of heam iron source or <25 mg of ascorbic, Intermediate bioavailability: 30-90 gm of heam iron source or 25-75mgof ascorbic acid and High bioavailability: >90 gm of heam iron source or >75 mg ascorbic acid (**Sight and life /Newsletter/ 2002**)

Socioeconomic factors assessment:

Using according to Elgelany, et al., (2012) new socioeconomic assessment status scale for health research in Egypt. The final scale included 7 domains with a total score of 84, with a higher score indicating better SES: Education and cultural, Occupation, Family, Family possessions, Economic, Home sanitation, Health care .Analysis Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 20.0) was used to conduct all the statistical analyses.

Statistical Analysis

Estimated energy requirement (EER) was calculated for each individual using their age, sex, height, and weight is according to the Institute of Medicine Dietary Reference In-

take equations. Given anecdotal evidence that suggests that the majority of subjects with stunting participate in limited physical activity outside the home, EER was estimated based on a sedentary lifestyle activity coefficient of 1.0. Percentage of EER was calculated as %EER (kcal/EER). Analyses of continuous variables were summarized as means with standard deviations and categorical variables were summarized as numbers and percentages. All inferences are based on two tailed tests with a threshold of <0.05 for declaring significance. Intake was categorized to $< 50\%$, $50-74\%$, $75-99\%$ and $\geq 100\%$. Chi square, Fisher's exact, one sample *t* test, Student's *T* test and one way ANOVA test were used to compare intake between sex, Ht Z score and Wt Z score categories. All analyses were conducted using SPSS version according to (Zar, 1984).

RESULTS:

This study included 50 patients from the outpatient clinic of the NNI, 31 were boys (62.

%) and 19 were girls (38%) Their ages range between 2 and 5 years. There was no statistical difference between boys and girls between regarding weight, height (table 1).

Heights of patients were plotted on height for age growth charts. The patient was considered as stunted when <-2 SD below normal matched height. In the current study stunted boys were 62. % where is stunted girl were 38% with statistical difference between boys and girls.

Table (3), (4) Amount of daily macro and micronutrient intake among study groups. Using paired *t-test*, the patients consumption of total calories was significantly less than the caloric requirement of normal children $P= 0, 00$) When compared the amount of different macro nutrients intake by the subjects with the RDA for aged matched subjects, significant statistical differences were found between all food items and the RDA ($P < 0.00$) regarding micronutrients there was signifi-

cant statistical differences in iron and zinc, Ca and the RDA ($P < 0.00$)

Dietary adequacy was interpreted according to the following categories: 50% (unsafe level of consumption), >50-75% (unaccepted level of consumption), >75-100% (accepted level of consumption), >100-120% adequate level of consumption and >120% (over consumption). The current data showed that the 46% of children had >50-75% (unaccepted level of consumption of calories and protein, While 56% of children had unsafe level of consumption of carbohydrate. The 48% of studies had adequate level of consumption fat Table (5)

Table (6) RDA% distribution from micronutrients according to sex Micronutrients There was unsafe level of consumption of vitamin A and, unaccepted level of consumption of vitamin C unsafe level of consumption of iron , calcium and unaccepted level of consumption of zinc with no statistically difference between male and females.

Regarding the socioeconomic factors results recorded that there were low level in some socioeconomic factors, parental educational culture 36.11%, and economic level in 44.44%. Family possession 50% and family domain 47.22 mean while there were middle level of other socioeconomic factors, level of home sanitation, health care and Family domain 41.66%, 44.44%, 41.66% respectively (table 7).

DISCUSSION:

Linear growth failure is a major public health problem in developing countries, in children under five (**Black, et al., 2013**) (**United Nations Children's 2013**). Extensive research has shown intergenerational consequences of stunting (**McDonald et al., 2013**), poorer psychomotor and mental development and school achievement (**Walker et al., 2011**). With regard to child characteristics, our analysis confirms that, boys are at higher risk than girls these results were recognized in literature it confirms results from sub-Saharan African counties (**Keino 2014**). The key of suc-

cess against stunting is focusing attention on nutritional status (**Picot 2012**). Assessment of the dietary intake of studied children showed that, the total calories was significantly less than the caloric requirement of normal children, significant statistical differences were found between all food items and the RDA for healthy children. Our findings, were in agreement with the observations of **Jesmin et al. (2011)** who found this association. Similar findings were reported by **Kikafunda et al. (1998)**.

Few children in our study met the definition of adequate diet, our result was in line with that (**Amany et al. , 2014**) . The indicators of socioeconomic status, such as parental education, family occupation, and study found that stunting were more prevalent with parents of low educational level and parents employed a domestic worker. Results find wide supportive evidence as **Barbara, et al., 2009; kejno, et al., 2014 and, et al., 2016**. There is widely accepted theory entail that economic welfare boosts nutritional status.

The interpretation of that relation can be explained by fact that richer families usually have better access to health care and improved environmental health, therefore pointing to a broader relation between poverty and stunting (**Chiaraetal et al., 2016**). The present study findings was a supportive of this result as found significant association the poor economic welfare and stunting., Stunting was significantly more prevalent and alarming among low social level, in comparison to higher social class (**Barbara, et al., 2009**). The present results are consistent with other studies that revealed family size; number of under-five children in the family was one of the detrimental factors of stunting. In this study found that family members were more likely to be stunted than those living in households with two to four family members. This result was in line with (**Teshale et al., 2014**). Access to improved water source and functioning hand-washing station protects against stunting (**Fewtrell, et al., 2005**). Four tallies there was satisfactory

level of home sanitation, health care which proved some successful Governmental effort in alleviating these problems.

CONCLUSION:

This study was successful in identifying priority nutrients for dietary intervention including intake. Both macro and micro nutrients was inadequate total calories and carbohydrate protein vitamin A, calcium zinc, and iron. The most important determinately socioeconomic factors of stunting in our result were the educational level, the occupation, and the family income and size. Interventions that increase household wealth, improve educational level and Family planning activities should be implemented to reduce stunting.

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Table (1): Percent distribution of Individual according to sex, age groups weight and height for age Z score

groups	boys		girls		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
stunted	31	62.0	19	38	50	100.0

Table (2): The means and standard deviations of Anthropometric measures and clinical data according to sex

Groups Parameters	Boys(31)		Girls (19)		Total (50)		T test	P value
	Mean ± SD	Min - Max	Mean ± SD	Min - Max	Mean ± SD	Min - Max		
Weight (k)	13.1 ± 1.8	10.0 – 17.0	12.3 ± 2.0	10.0 – 17.0	12.8 ± 1.9	10.0 – 17.0	1.52	0.135
Height (cm)	93.2 ± 7.1	77.0 – 115.0	90.7 ± 7.2	75.0 – 105.0	92.2 ± 7.1	75.0 – 115.0	1.17	0.247
BMI	15.3 ± 2.4	9.1 – 21.9	15.0 ± 2.0	12.1 – 18.7	15.2 ± 2.3	9.1 – 21.9	0.45	0.668

Table (3): The means and standard deviations of daily macronutrients intake

parameters	No	Mean \pm SD	Min - Max	P value
Energy (kcal)	50	643.3 \pm 182.0	381.8 – 1046.5	0.000
Total Protein (gm)	50	20.9 \pm 6.2	9.8 – 36.4	0.000
Total Fat (gm)	50	19.0 \pm 9.6	6.9 – 45.9	0.001
Carbohydrates (gm)	50	97.2 \pm 28.3	48.4 – 162.9	0.000

Table (4): The means and standard deviations of daily micronutrient intake

parameters	No	Mean \pm SD	Min - Max	P value
- Calcium (mg)	50	151.6 \pm 56.6	44.8 – 290.3	0.061
- iron (mg)	50	10.0 \pm 1.8	7.2 – 13.5	0.001
- Phosphorus	50	167.6 \pm 107.5	5.0 – 459.8	0.474
- zinc (μ g)	50	2.9 \pm 0.9	1.4 – 5.1	0.000
- Magnesium (mg)	50	54.1 \pm 18.2	28.3 – 124.4	0.001
- Potassium	50	699.0 \pm 239.5	288.5 – 1194.2	0.000
- Fiber (gm)	50	2.5 \pm 0.9	0.6 – 4.9	0.056
- Selenium (μ g)	50	3.2 \pm 1.9	0.5 – 7.7	0.233
- Vitamin A (μ g)	50	102.4 \pm 88.0	6.7 – 339.3	0.474
- Vitamin C (μ g)	50	15.1 \pm 8.6	1.2 – 42.2	0.163
- Vitamin B1 (μ g)	50	0.4 \pm 0.1	0.2 – 0.6	0.002
- Vitamin B2 (μ g)	50	0.3 \pm 0.1	0.1 – 0.5	0.045

Table (5): RDA % distribution from macronutrients according to sex

Macro nutrients	Boys		Girls		Total		χ^2	P value
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Calories (kcal)								
Unsafe < 50%	7	22.6	10	22.6	17	34.0	16.301	0.000
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	21	67.7	2	10.6	23	46.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	3	9.7	7	36.8	10	20.0		
Protein (gm)								
Unsafe < 50%	10	32.3	10	52.6	20	40.0	6.394	0.011
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	18	58.0	5	26.3	23	46.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	3	9.7	4	21.1	7	14.0		
Carbohydrate (gm)								
Unsafe < 50%	18	58.1	10	52.6	28	56.0	0.976	0.001
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	13	41.9	9	47.4	22	44.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Fat (gm)								
Unsafe < 50%	0	0.0	1	5.3	1	2.0	0.113	0.737
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	5	16.1	4	21.1	9	18.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	6	19.4	10	52.5	16	32.0		
Adequate \geq 100-120%	20	64.5	4	21.1	24	48.0		

* P value is significant <0.05

 \geq 50-75% unacceptable level of consumption \geq 100-120% adequate level of consumption

< 50% unsafe level of consumption

 \geq 75-100% acceptable level of consumption \geq 120 over consumption

Table (6): RDA% distribution from micronutrients according to sex

micronutrients	boys		Girl		Total		χ^2	P value
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
Iron (mg)								
Unsafe < 50%	11	35.5	10	52.6	21	42.0	5.659	0.017
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	17	54.8	3	15.8	20	40.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	3	9.7	6	31.6	9	18.0		
Calcium (mg)								
Unsafe < 50%	31	100.0	17	89.5	48	96.0	0.999	0.318
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	0	0.0	2	10.5	2	4.0		
Zinc (μg)								
Unsafe < 50%	6	19.4	10	22.6	16	32.0	5.194	0.023
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	18	58.0	5	26.3	23	46.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	7	22.6	4	21.1	11	22.0		
Vitamin A (μg)								
Unsafe < 50%	23	74.2	7	36.8	30	60.0	5.791	0.016
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	3	9.7	8	42.1	11	22.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	5	16.1	4	21.1	9	18.0		
Vitamin C (μg)								
Unsafe < 50%	10	32.3	3	15.8	13	26.0	0.137	0.712
Unacceptable \geq 50-75%	8	25.8	10	52.6	18	36.0		
Acceptable \geq 75-100%	9	29.0	6	31.6	15	30.0		
Adequate \geq 100-120%	4	12.9	0	0.0	4	8.0		

* P value is significant <0.05

 \geq 50-75% unacceptable level of consumption \geq 100-120% adequate level of consumption

< 50% unsafe level of consumption

 \geq 75-100% acceptable level of consumption \geq 120 over consumption

Table (7): Socioeconomic factors among a sample

Educational cultural level both husband and wife							
Level	Gender				Total		P value
	Boys		girls		no	%	
	no	%	No	%			
Very low	7	30.43	5	38.46	12	33.33	0.843
Low	9	39.13	4	30.76	13	36.11	
middle	5	21.73	2	15.38	7	19.44	
high	2	8.69	2	15.38	4	11.11	
total	23	100	13	100	36	100	
Family domain							
Very low	1	4.34	2	15.38	3	8.33	0.063
Low	5	21.73	4	30.76	9	25	
middle	8	34.78	7	53.84	15	41.66	
high	9	39.13	0	0.00	9	25	
total	23	100	13	100	36	100	
Economic domain							
Very low	6	26.08	5	38.46	11	30.55	0.543
Low	10	43.47	6	46.15	16	44.44	
middle	4	17.39	2	15.38	6	16.66	
high	3	13.04	0	0.00	3	8.33	
total	23	100	13	100	36	100	

Occupation domain both husband and wife							
Very low	7	30.43	4	30.76	11	30.55	0.963
Low	11	47.82	7	53.84	18	50	
middle	3	13.04	1	7.69	4	11.11	
high	2	8.69	1	7.69	3	8.33	
total	23	100	13	100	36	100	
Family possessions domain							
Very low	7	30.43	4	30.76	11	30.55	0.997
Low	11	47.82	6	46.15	17	47.22	
middle	3	13.04	2	15.38	5	13.88	
high	2	8.69	1	7.69	3	8.33	
total	23	100	13	100	26	100	
Home sanitation domain							
Very low	2	8.69	0	0.00	2	5.55	0.646
Low	7	30.43	3	23.07	10	27.77	
middle	9	39.13	6	46.15	15	41.66	
high	5	21.73	4	30.76	9	25	
total	23	100	13	100	36	100	
Health care domain							
Very low	3	13.04	1	7.69	4	11.11	0.958
Low	6	26.08	4	30.76	10	27.77	
middle	10	43.47	6	46.15	16	44.44	
high	4	17.39	2	30.76	6	16.66	
total	23	100	13	100	36	100	

العوامل الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والمتناول الغذائي بين مجموعة من الأطفال قصيري القامة قبل السن المدرسي في القاهرة

سلوى محمود صالح , هدى مسعود الجزيري , احمد مرعى

الملخص العربي:

تعتبر مشكلة قصر القامة من أهم المشاكل انتشار في البلاد خاصة في الأطفال الصغار. الهدف من الدراسة : تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى دراسة تأثير الحالة الاجتماعية والتغذية على الأطفال تحت سن خمس سنوات. تشمل هذه الدراسة على عدد 50 من الأطفال بنين وبنات في عمر من 2- 5 سنوات وقد تم اخذ العينة من العيادات الخارجية للمعهد القومي للتغذية. وتم تقييم الحالة الاجتماعية للعينة وذلك من خلال عدد من الأسئلة الخاصة بالحالة الاجتماعية وكذلك الحالة التغذوية من خلال استرجاع 24 ساعة والتكرار الغذائي وتقييم المقاييس الجسمية. كانت أهم النتائج ما يلي: تمثل نسبة البنين في العينة 62% والبنات 38%. أوضحت هذه الدراسة انخفاض في المتناول من السعرات والكربوهيدرات والبروتين وكذلك الكالسيوم - الحديد - الزنك - فيتامين أ بالمقارنة بالاحتياجات الغذائية. أهمية الحالة الاجتماعية ومنها مستوى تعليم للأب وإم- دخل الأسرة- حجم الأسرة - وظيفة الأب وإم في الإصابة بقصر القامة . الخلاصة: لقد نجحت هذه الدراسة في تحديد أهمية العناصر الغذائية في الغذاء المتناول وكذلك دور الحالة الاجتماعية ومنها مستوى تعليم للأب وإم- دخل الأسرة- حجم الأسرة - وظيفة الأب وإم في التأثير على الإصابة بقصر القامة عند الأطفال.

الكلمات المفتاحية: قصر القامة - اطفال قبل المدرسة - الحالة الاجتماعية - الحالة الغذائية