

AN ASSESSMENT OF NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Dissertation for the Degree of Master of Science
Foods and Nutrition

By

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Abstract: The period that begins after infancy and lasts until puberty is often referred as the latent or quiescent period of growth- a contrast to the dramatic changes that occur during infancy and adolescence. Although physical growth may be less remarkable and proceed at a steadier pace than it did during the first year, these preschool and middle school years are a time of significant growth in social, cognitive and emotional areas. The preschool stage is a crucial and transitional period, when the child is struggling to come to equilibrium with its ecology, that is to say, this stage represents a transition from infancy when the child is protected physically and physiologically by the mother. It also remarked that the health penalty is imposed more seriously on children in the age range from weaning period to five years of age. Pre-school children belonging to the 1-5 years age group are vulnerable because of their rapid growth rate. They need more attention and care for physical and mental development. Physical growth, development and well being are directly related to nutritional status. Malnutrition is not only an important cause of childhood morbidity and mortality, but also leads to permanent impairment of physical and possibly, of mental growth of those who survive. It is the most widespread condition affecting the health of the child. Thus nutritional status of the child is a sensitive indicator of not only health of the child but also community health and nutrition. Assessment of nutritional status of community is one of the first steps in the formulation of any public health strategy to combat mal nutrition. Several indicators like nutritional anthropometry, clinical examination for nutritional deficiency signs and biochemical estimations are available for assessment of nutritional status of community. Present study was conducted with aim of "Assessment of Nutritional Status of Preschool Children". Present study was conducted with descriptive and survey method. For data collection, a pre structured an ideal questionnaire was used. Total 200 Preschool children were randomly selected from ten villages of Mehsana taluta of Mehsana district of Gujarat state. For Anthropometric measurement, body weight, height was measured and BMI was calculated and categorized, head and chest and mid upper arm circumference were also measured for the assessment of nutritional status. Dietary information was also collected. Suitable statistical analysis was applied.

Key words: growth, Malnutrition, community health and nutrition