

Malnutrition and it's effects on Indian Community

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Abstract

Malnutrition refers to the situation where there is an unbalanced diet in which some nutrients are in excess, lacking or wrong proportion. India is one of the fastest growing countries in terms of population and economics, sitting at a population of 1.2 billion and growing at 1.5%–1.7% annually. Some of the major causes for malnutrition in India is Economic inequality. Due to the low social status of some population groups, their diet often lacks in both quality and quantity. Women who suffer malnutrition are less likely to have healthy babies. In India, mothers generally lack proper knowledge in feeding children. Consequently, new born infants are unable to get adequate amount of nutrition from their mothers.

Keywords: malnutrition, balanced diet, depression, adipose tissue, obesity, wound healing

Introduction

Malnutrition is the condition that occurs when your body does not get enough nutrients. Malnutrition among under-five children is a major public health problem in India. This is reflected by the fact that the prevalence of under-weight children in India is among the highest in the world, and is nearly double that of Sub-Saharan Africa. Each year approximately 2.3 million deaths among 6-60 months aged children in developing countries are associated with malnutrition. Across India, not all children are malnourished and some are more extremely malnourished than others. The numbers of those affected vary between remnants of the caste system, between Indian states, and gender where girls are more likely to be undernourished because of their lower status in society. It is important for the health system to detect malnutrition at an early stage for planning and implementing timely interventions at the community level.

Method and Materials

The information was collected from Google search engine, wikipedia and others. The keywords used for the search included: Malnutrition, balanced diet, Depression, adipose tissue, Obesity, wound healing, India. The search since 2012 until date yielded articles out of which all these articles were reviewed and analyzed for discrepancies. The information was presented in the form of descriptions under the headings - causes of malnutrition, sign of undernutrition, nutritional status, control measure of malnutrition and conclusion.

Causes of Malnutrition

1. Malnutrition in children is caused due to the lack of a nutritious and balanced diet.
2. Indigestible and harmful diets can be among the major malnutrition causes.
3. Irregular intake of food can cause malnutrition.

4. A dirty environment at home or in the school is one of the basic causes of malnutrition.
5. Very often poverty is another major reason behind undernourished children.
6. Many a times illiteracy and ignorance also result in malnutrition wherein the parents are unaware of the dietary requirements of their children.
7. Pregnant women with deficits in the normal diet.
8. Changing diets and patterns of physical activity.
9. Obesity and overweight.
10. Lack of breastfeeding practices.
11. Deficiencies of vitamins and minerals such as vitamin A, zinc, iron and calcium.

The RSoC reports that

- 38.7% are considered stunted (low height for age)
- 29.4% are considered underweight (low weight for age)
- 15% are considered wasted (low weight for height)

Signs of under nutrition

1. Extreme loss of adipose tissue
2. Difficulty in breathing, with the person suffering from frequent respiratory failures
3. Difficulty to recuperate after a surgical procedure
4. Depression
5. Extremely low body temperatures
6. A dip in the white blood cell count
7. Frequent infections and delayed recovery
8. Delayed wound healing
9. Low libido
10. Irregular menstrual cycles
11. Extreme levels of fatigue and tiredness
12. Irritability and anxiety
13. Extremely dry skin and scalp

Table 1: Nutritional Status of children (% of children aged under 5) 2013-14

S. No.	State	Stunted	Severely stunted	Wasted	Severely wasted	Underweight	Severely underweight
1	Andhra Pradesh	35.5	12.1	19	6	22.3	4.7
2	Arunachal Pradesh	28.4	19.6	17	7.1	24.6	13.3
3	Assam	40.6	21	9.7	2.7	22.2	7
4	Bihar	49.4	26.1	13.1	3.9	37.1	14.7
5	Chhattisgarh	43	16.4	12.9	2.4	33.9	9.9
6	Delhi	29.2	14.1	14.2	4.5	19.4	4.9
7	Goa	21.3	6.6	15.4	4.9	16.2	2
8	Gujrat	41.8	18.5	18.7	6.7	33.5	10.1
9	Haryana	36.5	19.3	8.8	2.7	22.7	7.5
10	Himachal Pradesh	34.2	16.1	10.2	3.9	19.5	5.6
11	Jammu & Kashmir	31.9	12.8	7.1	2.5	15.6	5.4
12	Jharkhand	47.3	23.6	15.6	3.7	42.1	16
13	Karnataka	34.7	15.2	17.5	6.7	29	9.7
14	Kerala	19.5	7.9	15.5	5.4	18.5	5.7
15	Madhya Pradesh	41.6	18.5	17.5	5.4	36.1	12
16	Maharashtra	35.4	10.1	18.6	6.3	25.2	5.7
17	Manipur	33.2	12.6	7.1	2.4	14.1	3.5
18	Meghalay a	42.9	29.4	13.1	5.2	30.9	16
19	Mizoram	26.9	15.3	14.3	6.2	14.8	6.1
20	Nagaland	29.1	15.8	11.8	4.8	19.5	7.9
21	Odisha	38.2	15.5	18.3	4.9	34.4	11
22	Punjab	30.5	13.1	8.7	3.2	16.1	4.4
23	Rajasthan	36.5	17.3	14.2	2.9	31.5	11.2
24	Sikkim	28	11	5.1	1.4	15.8	6.5
25	Tamilnadu	23.3	9.4	19.1	6.3	23.3	6.1
26	Tripura	31	15	17.1	7	30.5	16.8
27	Uttar Pradesh	50.6	28.6	10	2.9	34.5	12.9
28	Uttarakhand	34.2	13.8	9.3	2.6	20.5	5.9
29	West Bengal	34.7	12.8	15.3	3.9	30	8.9
	All India	38.8	17.4	15	4.6	29.4	9.5

Control measure of malnutrition

1. One can overcome malnutrition by taking food that consists of: Carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables, proteins, milk, fats and meat
2. Consuming plenty of fruits, grains and vegetables can avoid malnutrition completely as these all are rich in nutrients, proteins, vitamins and minerals
3. It is better to avoid food that has high amounts of fat and cholesterol and eat variety of foods that have less amounts of fat and cholesterol and adequate amounts of salt, sugar and sodium
4. Drinking adequate amount of water like 6 to 8 liters per day
5. Doing exercise for at least 30 minutes a day can keep body healthy and fit
6. It's good to maintain exact weight according to one's own height
7. Avoid consuming too much of alcohol and also QUIT smoking
8. And breast feeding a baby for at least 6 to 12 months is the best way to prevent early childhood malnutrition.

Conclusion

Prevalence of under-nutrition among under-five children is relatively high and varied widely depending on the assessment methodology adopted, and there are limited studies on assessment of over-nutrition. The distribution of risk factors and its influence on malnutrition among children in a given set up should be analyzed in planning diverse control measures. Many projects of government sectors and NGO's are presently working on malnutrition control so proper extension of these projects should be done by government machineries for

awareness of peoples about malnutrition. Strengthening public health interventions for mild malnutrition cases among the vulnerable groups with a focus on socioeconomic development and research on overweight, obesity and its etiological factors in the country are the prerequisites required to tackle malnutrition among under-five children in India.

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