Prevalence of under-nutrition among primary school children

JYOTI TIWARI AND MEDHA

ABSTRACT: Under-nutrition is a widespread problem in developing countries and it reflects lack of knowledge and awareness on the part of the parents. Inadequate nutrition among children leads to improper development of their body and mind resulting into lower level of efficiencies. To know the prevalence of under-nutrition among primary school children, a sample of 270 children from Chamoli district of Uttarakhand state were selected. Three commonly used under nutrition indicators, i.e., underweight, stunting and wasting were used to evaluate the nutritional status of the subjects. For this, the weight and height measurements were converted into weight-for-age, height-for-age and weight-for-height percentage of standard for each child using NCHS standards. The children were grouped into different grades of nutritional status by both Gomez’s and Waterlow’s classifications. The study revealed that weight and mid upper arm circumferences (MUAC) of both boys and girls were comparatively below the reference standards of both ICMR and NCHS. Height of boys and girls in all categories of age were almost equal to the reference standards of ICMR and NCHS. Regarding the prevalence of stunting, children in all age groups were found to be normal. Only 12.23 per cent children were mildly stunted in the category of 8 years. Regarding the prevalence of wasting, 65.18 per cent children were found to be normal, 22.59 per cent were in mild category of wasting and 12.22 per cent children were in moderate category of wasting. 62.96 per cent children were found to be mildly underweight.

KEY WORDS: Under-nutrition, Stunting, Prevalence