

## A Study on the Morbidity Pattern of School Children in Doiwala Block, Dehradun

S. KISHORE, J. SEMWAL AND K. MUZAMMIL

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Research indicates that nutritional deficiencies and poor health in primary school children are among the important causes of low school enrolment, high absenteeism, early dropouts and poor classroom and exam performance. So the present study was conducted.

**Objective:** To find out the morbidity pattern of the primary school children.

**Methods:** A cross sectional survey to find out the morbidity pattern was conducted on 596 school children (246 boys and 350 girls), aged 5-16 years studying in class I-VIII in six different schools of Doiwala Block, Dehradun. The morbidity survey was conducted by a health team and the children were approached in their respective schools after taking due permission of the school principal. Preliminary information was recorded on the survey register. A detailed history taking and clinical examination was done with special attention on those systems which were affected most. Data thus collected was entered and analyzed by using Epi Info Statistical Software Package.

**Results:** A total of 596 school children were included in the study, out of which 246 (41.27%) were boys and 350 (58.72%) were girls. The most common chewing habit was Supari chewing and was found in 22 (3.69%) children followed by Tobacco chewing in 7 (1.17%) children. Morbidity related to oral cavity was higher in boys, 131 (53.25%). Anemia was present in 162 (27.18%) children. Worm infestation was significantly higher in boys, 71 (28.86%). Watering of eyes (2.68%) was the commonest finding. Mean BMI in our study was found to be significantly lower as compared to ICMR and NCHS data.

**Conclusions:** The spectrum of morbidity reported in this study is largely dependent on hygiene and calorie intake. In spite of regular mid day meal program at schools, our children are still undernourished that means the calorie intake at home is not adequate. There is a strong need for a regular health check-up and follow up services at school level.

See end of the article for authors' affiliation

#### K. MUZAMMIL

Department of  
Community Medicine,  
Muzaffarnagar Medical  
College,  
MUZAFFARNAGAR  
(U.P.) INDIA

Health is very important for the development of any nation. No doubt, it is linked to educational status, quality of life, standard of living and economic productivity. By acquiring health related knowledge, values, skills and practices, one can be empowered to pursue a healthy life and to work as agents of change for the health of their communities in which they live.<sup>1</sup>

Research indicates that nutritional deficiencies and poor health in primary school children are among the important causes of low school enrolment, high absenteeism, early dropouts and poor classroom performance and ultimately failure to do well in the examinations. Health is therefore considered to be the important key factor in school entry as well as continued participation and attainment in school.<sup>3,4</sup> According to a study, about 40% of the school children are found to be reasonably healthy and free from defects or morbidities.<sup>5</sup>

Poor nutrition greatly affects the achievements in the educational field as well as in the sports performance. The relationship

between the scholastic performance and nutritional status of the children has already been established.<sup>6</sup> School children are easily accessible and adoptable section of the population. They can contribute much towards attack on community health problems. They transmit all the health related advices learned in the school to their parents, family members, friends, relatives and neighbors. Actually in this way children act as health leaders in the family/society.<sup>7</sup> This child to child approach is very helpful in mobilizing the people towards healthy life and generating awareness on personal hygiene and reduction of unhealthy practices.

Keeping in view of the above facts, it was planned to identify the morbidity status of school children, to prevent them from decessed condition, to promote their health through regular health education and annual medical examination. The minor ailments were treated in time and high-risk children were screened out and referred early to higher center/HIMS for better management.

#### Key words :

Anemia, Dental caries, Worm infestation, Tobacco use, BMI.

Accepted :  
May, 2009