FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO MALNUTRITION AMONG UNDER-FIVE CHILDREN ATTENDING KAYOVE HEALTH CENTER

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ABSTRACT

Background: Malnutrition is a major global health challenge, contributing to nearly 45% of child mortality worldwide. This study assesses the factors contributing to malnutrition among under-five children attending Kayove Health Center. The specific objectives are to identify the social and economic factors influencing malnutrition in this population.

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted among 80 mothers with malnourished children under five years old. Data was collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS Version 21.0.

Findings: The majority of parents (62.5%) were aged between 31-36 years, and 58.75% were married. More than half (53.75%) had only completed primary education. Socioeconomic factors were significant contributors, with 62% of parents unemployed, 56% earning below 50,000 Rwf per month, and 71.25% lacking medical insurance. Additionally, 56.25% of respondents reported receiving no financial support from their husbands.

Recommendations: Kayove Health Center should implement community education programs on hygiene, nutrition, and family planning. Health workers should be trained in malnutrition prevention strategies to better support affected families.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Malnutrition is a condition resulting from deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in energy and nutrient intake. It remains a prevalent public health issue, particularly in developing countries. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that 159 million children under five years are stunted, while 50 million suffer from wasting. In Rwanda, chronic malnutrition affects 38% of children under five, with higher prevalence in rural areas. Kayove Health Center records indicate that over 100 children per month are malnourished or at risk.

Problem Statement

Despite efforts to improve child nutrition in Rwanda, malnutrition remains a significant public health issue. In Kayove Health Center, many children suffer from malnutrition due to socioeconomic and health-related factors. This study aims to identify the key contributors to malnutrition in this region.

Objectives of the Study

General Objective: To assess the factors contributing to malnutrition among children under five years old at Kayove Health Center.

Specific Objectives:

1. To identify the socio-demographic factors contributing to malnutrition.

2. To examine the economic factors influencing malnutrition in under-five children.

Significance of the Study

The findings will provide valuable insights for parents, health workers, and policymakers to improve child nutrition strategies. It will also serve as a reference for future research in this field.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design: A descriptive cross-sectional quantitative study was conducted.

Target Population: The study targeted 100 parents of malnourished children attending Kayove Health Center.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size: A sample of 80 participants was selected using Yamane's formula for sample size determination.

Data Collection: Structured questionnaires were used to collect socio-demographic and economic data.

Data Analysis: Data was analyzed using SPSS Version 21.0, with results presented in tables and percentages.

Ethical Considerations: Ethical approval was obtained from Mount Kenya University and Kayove Health Center. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

- 62.5% of parents were aged 31-36 years.

- 58.75% were married.

- 53.75% had only completed primary education.

- 75% of caregivers were mothers.

Economic Factors

- 62% of parents were unemployed.

- 56% had a monthly income below 50,000 Rwf.

- 71.25% lacked medical insurance.

- 56.25% reported no financial support from their husbands.

Discussion

These findings align with global studies indicating that poverty, low parental education, and unemployment are key risk factors for childhood malnutrition. Limited financial resources and lack of access to healthcare services further exacerbate the issue.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study confirms that socio-demographic and economic factors significantly contribute to malnutrition among under-five children at Kayove Health Center. Addressing poverty, improving parental education, and enhancing access to healthcare services are crucial for reducing malnutrition.

Recommendations

- **Kayove Health Center:** Implement educational programs on hygiene, nutrition, and family planning.

- **Health Workers:** Receive additional training on malnutrition prevention and intervention.

- **Parents:** Improve feeding practices through community nutrition programs.

- **Policymakers:** Strengthen social protection programs to support vulnerable families.

REFERENCES

(References formatted in APA style as per journal requirements)