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Effect of nutritional and psychosocial factors on educational performance of early female adolescents in Galle area: Preliminary study findings

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Objectives: To describe the nutritional status of early female adolescent and its effects on educational performance
Methods: A school based descriptive cross sectional study was conducted on randomly selected 100 female adolescents (age 11 to 14 years) from Galle educational zone. Weight, height, waist and hip circumference were measured to assess protein energy nutritional status. Centers for Disease Control, 2000 values for BMI were used to categorize nutritional status. Socio-demographic questionnaire and psychosocial adversity scale were administered to investigate confounders affecting nutritional status. The scores for mathematics, Sinhala and Science subjects were used to assess educational performance.
Results: The mean BMI was 18.08 (±4.35 SD). The prevalence of thinness (BMI<5th percentile) was 33% (n=32) and 13.4% (n=13) were overweight (BMI>85th percentile). Stunting, an indicator of previous or long standing malnutrition, affected 25.8% (n=25) while 28.9% (n=28) were wasted. Only 8.2% (n=8) were obese. 68% (N= 5) of obese children and 46.6% (N= 6) overweight children belonged to high income category. There is a significant association of mother's educational state (p = 0.021) and father's occupational state (p=0.027) with educational performance. There is no significant association between BMI and average score for subject mark (p=0.153).
Conclusions: High rate of growth deficiency and under nutrition in adolescence require urgent nutritional intervention strategies. Nutritional status did not play a major role in educational performance of school going adolescents. Mother's educational state and father's occupational state are important factors affecting educational achievement of child.

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Utilization pattern and patient's accessibility to the Out Patient Department (OPD), District General Hospital, Kalutara

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Objectives: This paper outlines the demography of patients, their accessibility, time distribution of patients and the waiting time in the Out Patient Department, District General Hospital, Kalutara.
Methods: Descriptive cross sectional study of three months in a sample of 423 patients of 18-70 years were collected using systematic sampling by two trained assistants with an interviewer administered questionnaire.
Results: Average daily attendance was 1154 patients; 53% attended before 10 am; 35% belonged to the age group 31-45 years; two thirds were females; majority had education in the range "Grade 6-10"; one third had come within "1-5 kilometer"; this was the closest OPD for 77% of patients; majority had spent less than ½ hour for arrival; bus is the main mode of transport. Majority were registered and seen by a doctor within 30 minutes; consultation time was limited to less than 5 minutes in 78%; 35% had spent 1-3 hours in the dispensary; 50% had taken more than 30 minutes for the investigations and finally 56% % had spent 1-3 hours and 22% had spent more than 3 hours in the OPD.
Conclusions: Measures need to be taken to redistribute the staff according to the patient load. Capacity building and drug availability should be targeted to the majority groups. Measures need to be taken to improve waiting time.