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Original Article

Prevalence of Undernutrition of Lodha Children Aged 1-14 Years of Paschim Medinipur District, West Bengal, India

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Abstract:

Objective: Childhood undernutrition among tribal children is a serious public health problem in India. The present study was conducted to assess the prevalence of undernutrition (underweight, stunting and wasting) among Lodha children of Paschim Medinipur, West Bengal, India.

Methods: This cross sectional study was conducted in a village of Paschim Medinipur district. A total of 165 (early childhood=74, late childhood=91) children aged 1-14 years were measured and included in the present study following simple random method. The children were further divided into two categories: early childhood: under 6 years (<72 months) and late childhood: ≥ 72 months. Anthropometric measurements such as height and weight were made following standard techniques. Children were considered underweight, stunting and wasting as weight-for-age, height-for-age and weight-for-height Z-score below -2 standard deviation using the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reference population.

Findings: The prevalence of underweight, stunting and wasting was 33.9%, 26.1% and 19.4%, respectively. Of these, 9.1%, 9.7% and 3.6% children were found to be severely underweight, stunted and wasted. Moreover, the prevalence of underweight (47.3% vs 23.1%) and stunting (35.1% vs 18.7%) was significantly higher in early childhood compared to during late childhood. They had 2.05 (RR= 2.05; 95% confidence interval (CI): 1.31– 3.20) and 1.88 (CI: 1.11–3.19) times greater chance to be underweight and stunted than during late childhood. Whereas, the prevalence of wasting was similar in both groups (20.3% vs 18.9%; RR=1.09; CI:0.58-2.02). Similarly, the rates of severe underweight (early childhood vs late childhood: 16.2% vs 3.3%) and stunting (20.3% vs 1.1%) were significantly higher in early childhood. They had 4.92 (CI: 1.44–16.79) fold and 18.45 (CI: 2.49-136.42) fold more risk to be an underweight and stunted compared to during late childhood.

Conclusion: The nutritional status of the Lodha children, especially during early childhood was unsatisfactory. There is an urgent requirement to improve the nutritional status of children in this ethnic group.

Keywords:

Tribe . Undernutrition . Stunting . Underweight . Wasting . Children

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