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MALNUTRITION AMONG 3-5 YEARS OLD CHILDREN IN THE HAOR BASIN OF BANGLADESH: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to identify factors contributing to malnutrition among 3 to 5 years old children living in Haor[a] Basin of Bangladesh. Two thousand and four hundred ninety eight (2498) children aged between 3 to 5 years were chosen randomly from forty primary schools[b] in Kishoreganj[c] district according to the cross-sectional design. The nutritional status of the children was assessed using a weight–for-age z-score[d] based on the World Health Organization 2007 cut-off points. The overall prevalence rate of underweight children was 18.2%. There was no significant difference in the prevalence rate between males and females (p=0.787). However, the percentage of underweight children was slightly higher among females (18.9%) compare to males (17.6%). There was association between parents' education level or employment status and childhood malnutrition (p=0.003). Malnutrition is significantly associated with living in unsafe environment, and at least lacking access to proper health facilities.

KEYWORDS: Children, Unhygienic Living Environment, Underweight, Haor Basin, Bangladesh

[a] Haor is a bowl shaped area. It covers seven districts of Bangladesh. Kishoreganj is one of the Haor surrounded areas in Bangladesh

[b] A primary school is a place where students aged from 1 to 10 years can learn primary education

[c] The Kishoreganj district is near to Dhaka (capital city of Bangladesh) and also one of the haor areas which is considered most vulnerable in terms of lacked behind of basic facilities like health, education, clean water, medical treatment

[d] z-score of <-2 is considered to be malnourished