

Characteristics and Prevalence of Anaemia among Mothers and Young Children in Rural Uganda

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Abstract : Anemia and chronic energy deficiency are significant manifestations of poor nutritional health. Anaemia and nutritional status screening are practical ways for assessing the prevalence of iron deficiency anemia in the food insecure populations with large groups of childbearing women and children. The objective of the study was to assess anemia prevalence and other clinical manifestations of malnutrition among pairs of mothers and young children in rural Uganda. This community cross-sectional study used consecutive sampling to select 214 mothers and 214 children for the study. Data was generated using structured questionnaire, anthropometric measurements and on site analysis for anemia. Bivariable and multivariable analyses were used to assess the effect of different factors on anaemia. Of the 214 mothers, 54.2% were 25-34 years of age, 76.7% unmarried, 63% low income, and 55% had more than four children. Of the 214 children, 57% were female, 50% between 1 to 3 years of age and 35% under one year, and. Overall, 38% of the households had more 4 children under the age of 12. The prevalence of anemia was 48% for mothers and 72% for children; 20.6% of mothers had moderate to severe chronic energy deficiency, 39% had moderately-severe anaemia (10 to 7.1 g/dL). Among children, 53% had moderately-severe anaemia, and 18.2% had severe anaemia. Parity $X^2 = 20$, $p < .037$, number of children under 12 years living in a household $X^2 = 10$, $p < .015$, and child's gender $X^2 = 6.5$, $p < .038$, had a significant relationship with maternal anaemia. There was a significant relationship between household income $X^2 = 10$, $p < .005$, marital status $X^2 = 9$, $p < .011$, owing a piece of land $X^2 = 18$, $p < .000$, owing home $X^2 = 7$, $p < .036$, and anaemia in children. The prevalence of anemia was high in both mothers and children. Income, marital status, owing a piece of land, owing home, number of children under age 12 in a household were associated with anaemia. Hence, efforts should be made for early diagnosis and management of anaemia deficiencies with special emphasis on those households with large number of children under age 12.

Keywords : anemia, maternal-child, nutrition, rural population

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