

Feeding Practices and Anthropometry of Mothers and Their Infants Residing in 2 Provinces of South Africa

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Abstract

Introduction: Malnutrition is a challenge both globally and in South Africa, it affects and is responsible for the deaths of children under the age of five. Malnutrition is a result of inadequate intake and infections. However little research has been done investigating the dietary practices that result in the observed nutritional status of mothers and their children aged 6-23 months. This study aims to investigate the dietary practices of mother-child pairs in rural and urban settings In South Africa during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Methods: A structured questionnaire was used to collect socio-demographic information about the mothers and the children. For anthropometric measurements, a digital scale was used to measure the weight for both mother and child measure to the nearest 0.1 kg, and length/ height was measured using a stadiometer and measuring mat measured to the nearest 0.1cm for mothers and children respectively. A non-stretch measuring tape was used to measure the mid-upper arm circumference. A single 24-hour recall and Food frequency questionnaire was used to find out the dietary practices of the mothers and children. The WHO breastfeeding questionnaire was used to investigate the feeding practices of children 6-23 months.

Results: The average age of the children was 14.5 months. Nine percent of the children were wasted, 8.0 % were stunted, and 9.1% were underweight. Iron intake was low for mothers with an intake of 10.4 and 13.1 mg/day in Gauteng and the Free State respectively. Vitamin C intake for Gauteng and Free State was respectively (21.0 and 17.0 mg/day). Children (6-23 months) intake iron and zinc (55% and 71%) consuming less than the RNI in the Free State and (58.8 and 86.3 %) in Gauteng province. The MDD was met by a low 34.2 and 44.3 % of infants and young children in Gauteng and the Free State respectively.

Conclusion: Based on the findings in Gauteng province and the Free State, inadequate dietary practices are prevalent and result in malnutrition, stunting wasting, and underweight in South Africa.