

Effect of maternal literacy on nutritional status of 24-42 months children in rural area of Pahari block of Mirzapur district

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The nutritional status of children influences their health status, which is a key determinant of human development. Worldwide, about a half of mortalities in children are directly or indirectly attributable to malnutrition. One of the major factor which affect malnutrition among children is maternal literacy level. It is well established that mothers' education has a positive effect on child health in developing countries. A mother is a provider of primary care that the child needs during the first 5 years of his/ her life. The type of care she provides depends to a large extent on her knowledge and understanding of some aspects of basic nutrition and health care. A cross sectional descriptive study was conducted among 75 children of age of 24-42 months and their mothers, using a multistage sampling technique. The study involved collecting information on the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents and the anthropometric measurement (weight and height) of the eligible children. The data was analyzed using statistical software SPSS 16.0. Out of 75 children and their mothers studied 32% mothers were illiterate, 53.3% were literate upto primary and middle, and only 14.7% were literate upto high school and Intermediate. There was a significant association between maternal literacy and malnutrition *i.e.* underweight: $X^2 = 15.33$, $df = 2$ $P < 0.001$, stunted: $X^2 = 6.89$, $df = 2$ $P < 0.05$ and wasted: $X^2 = 17.68$ $P < 0.001$. There is the need to promote and encourage female child education in order to empower them to know the right type of food and the right way to give it in the right quantity. This will help to prevent the occurrence of malnutrition among children especially those under the age of 5 year.

Key Words : Maternal literacy, Malnutrition, Underweight, Stunting, Wasting

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