

Nutrition and health status of urban and rural women of Garhwal region

NEETU DOBHAL AND RITA SINGH RAGHUVANSHI

The study comprised of 180 non-pregnant, non-lactating women from town Barkot and villages namely Sada, Kotiyalgaon, Uprari and Bhatia of district Uttarkashi of Uttarakhand. Uttarkashi is one of the districts of Uttarakhand, the western Himalayan hill state of India. The information was collected on socio-economic status, nutritional status, anthropometric measurements, nutritional knowledge and use of traditional foods. Urban women had higher literacy level (87.8%) than rural women (62.3%). The average BMI was found to be $21.89 \pm 2.4 \text{ kg/m}^2$ for urban subjects and $20.73 \pm 2.1 \text{ kg/m}^2$ for rural subjects. Body density ranged from 1.01 to 1.05 in urban subjects and 1.02 to 1.06 in rural subjects. About 87.8 per cent urban and 82.2 per cent rural subjects were found to be anaemic with the mean haemoglobin concentration of $9.71 \pm 1.6 \text{ g/100ml}$ and $10.48 \pm 1.7 \text{ g/100ml}$, respectively. The per cent RDA intake of protein, fat, calcium, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and ascorbic acid was more than 100 per cent. The intake of energy and iron was 86.8 and 80.5 per cent of RDA for all the subjects. The traditional foods used by the families were found to be nutritious. The most significant health problems of women of Uttarkashi were anaemia, followed by chronic energy deficiency, which can be taken care of by the use of traditional foods including green leafy vegetables and pulses.

Key Words : Nutritional profile, Correlates of malnutrition, Uttarkashi, Anthropometric measurements, Traditional foods, Nutritional security

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INTRODUCTION

District Uttarkashi, one of the 13 districts of Uttarakhand, situated at the height of 1250 meters and the most sparsely populated district of Uttarakhand is characterized by the rugged terrain, harsh climate, water scarcity, lack of basic amenities and mass migration of able-bodied males to plains. The large scale out-migration of men in search of employment in the plains or in the army has led to more drudgery on female members of the families of Uttarakhand. Women play a very important role in the economy and daily life of Uttarakhand hills. They participate in almost all the economic ventures like agriculture, animal husbandry, horticulture and collection of

fuel, food and fodder from forest. They also actively participate in the agricultural activities like clearing the fields, sowing, watering, weeding, harvesting and in storing the grains (Raghuvanshi, 2002) and thus, is one of the most vulnerable sections of the population from health and nutrition point of view. In view of the above mentioned aspects, the present research was undertaken to study nutritional status of the women residing in the urban and rural areas of district Uttarkashi and to compare the nutritional status of the women residing in urban area to the women living in rural areas.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out during winters in district Uttarkashi in the year 2003. The sample comprised of 180 women of 18-60 years age, randomly selected from urban (90) and rural (90) areas. These 90 women were then further divided into 3 groups each comprising 30 subjects *i.e.* 18-30 years, 31-45 years and 46-60 years. The urban population was selected from the town Barkot while rural population was selected from villages of Sada, Kotiyal gaon, Uprari and Bhatia of district Uttarkashi.

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