

Nutritional and health status of pregnant and lactating women in Parbhani, M.S.

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ABSTRACT

Lactating women are considered as nutritionally vulnerable. The requirement of nutrients are greater during lactation. Nutritional status of lactating women in India is very poor as the diets are grossly deficient in supplying essential nutrients. Socio-economic status, education and living are affects nutritional status of lactating women.

Key words : Lactation, Nutritional status, Nutrients

Lactating women are considered as nutritionally vulnerable. Lactation understandably represents a drain on maternal body composition. It involves considerable nutrient expenditure for the mother.

The estimated calorie expenditure for lactation varies from 400-700 k.cal. / day (RDA, 1984). Milk secretion requires energy over and above mothers own energy requirement.

This additional body fat store causes a great strain in the maternal nutritional status during lactation. The requirements for calories and other nutrients are therefore greater during lactation. Hence, much emphasis lies in providing adequately nutrients diet during lactation.

Malnutrition, in its serious form, is found among children, especially new borns and infants in the weaning and post weaning periods especially in rural areas. Hence, the study was undertaken to assess nutritional and health status of pregnant and lactating women.

METHODOLOGY

A random sample of 300 pregnant and 200 lactating women were selected. Lactating women who have 15 days to 4 months baby and it was stratified on the basis of women's SES, living area and education.

The data pertaining the study were collected by

personal interviewing the respondents, their family members, visiting their homes or hospitals. Further, following 24 hours recall method and Weighment method with question naire, for dietary and nutritional intake by taking anthropometric measurements was performed as per standard procedures.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the result of the Table, it was found that higher per cent of the women had normal nutritional status irrespective of their socio-economic status. From low SES group, twenty five per cent of the women had underweight. Only 16 per cents women from high SES were underweight and 84 per cents women were found of normal nutritional status.

On the whole, it can be said that as socio-economic status increases, the nutritional status of the women also increases and mean number of underweight decreases.

The reasons behind it may be that if SES increases, purchasing power increases and quality of regular diet also increases.

Vijayalakshimi *et al.* (1988) reported that the food and nutrient intake of low income mothers indicated on inadequacy with respect to all the foods and nutrients when compared with that of middle and high income group

Table 1 : Nutritional status of the selected lactating women on the basis of their SES

Sr. No.	Particulars	SES			Total frequency
		Low	Middle	High	
1.	Normal	58 (57)	78 (80)	43 (84)	159
2.	Under weight	13 (25)	20 (20)	08 (16)	41
3.	Severely underweight	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
4.	Overweight	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

Table 2 : Nutritional status of the selected lactating women on the basis of their living area

Sr. No.	Particulars	Area		Total frequency
		Rural	Urban high	
1.	Normal	75 (73)	84 (87)	159
2.	Under weight	28 (27)	13 (13)	41
3.	Severely underweight	Nil	Nil	Nil
4.	Overweight	Nil	Nil	Nil

Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage

mothers.

From this Table 2 it was found that 27 per cent respondents from rural area were underweight where as only 13 per cent women from urban area were found underweight. Eighty seven per cent women had normal nutritional status and 73 per cent rural womens had normal nutritional status.

A study reported by NIN (1983) indicated that there was a fall in the mean value of body weight of lactating women. This loss of body weight was attributed to the loss of maternal body fat and tissues to meet the additional needs due to the lactation and the chronically low calory intake of these women.

Conclusion:

In conclusion it can be said that to maintain nutritional status, consumption of all food stuffs in required quantity is necessary. Urban areas women were found to maintain their health status. In rural area, womens diet was deficient in leafy vegetables, milk, fruits and other

vegetables, so they could not maintain their nutritional status.

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