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Risk factors for undernutrition among children 0–59 months of age in Myanmar

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Abstract

Prevalence of childhood stunting in Myanmar is one of the highest in the South-East Asia countries. Cross-sectional data from the Demographic Health Survey 2015–16 were used to examine risk factors for stunting, wasting, and underweight among children aged 0–59 months. The prevalence of stunting (height-for-age z-score < -2), wasting (weight-for-height z-score < -2), and underweight (weight-for-age z-score < -2) was 29.0%, 7.3%, and 19.2%, respectively. Accounting for cluster design and sampling weights, multi-variable logistic regression was conducted with 35 household, maternal, and child characteristics. Current pregnancy and maternal height < 145 cm, and child's small birth size recalled by mother, home delivery, and older child age (ref: 0–5 months) predicted both stunting and underweight. Child's large birth size was protective for all stunting, wasting, and underweight. Maternal BMI < 18.5 kg/m² was a common risk factor for wasting and underweight. Lower wealth quintiles, maternal engagement in non-agricultural occupation, and male child predicted stunting only. Younger child age and not receiving vitamin-A supplementation in the last 6-month was risk factor for wasting only. Regional variation was also seen with a higher odds of stunting in West-South Region, North-East States, and West States, compared to Central Regions. In Myanmar, socioeconomic-demographic factors, poor maternal nutritional status, and living in certain geographic location are affecting children's undernutrition. It is recommended that intervening growth faltering focusing on the 1000 days of life; ensuring optimum maternal nutrition during and before pregnancy and at adolescence; societal support for mothers in poverty or engaged in non-agriculture; and understanding region-specific undernutrition pathways.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest