

Concerns about undernutrition among children aged 6 to 59 months in a sub-Saharan African country: A cross-sectional study P2-N19

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High prevalence of malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months in the Islands of Kwahu Afram Plains North District of the Eastern Region of Ghana. This has serious implications for the achievement of SDGs 2 and 3 in Ghana and by extension the West African sub-region.

BACKGROUND

- Childhood malnutrition is a major public health problem in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The prevalence of undernutrition is highest in sub-Saharan Africa when compared to other regions of the world
- Regional data on the determinants of child malnutrition are limited in many African countries especially in hard-to-reach areas

OBJECTIVE

- This study examined the prevalence and associated factors of undernutrition among children aged 6 to 59 months in the Islands of Kwahu Afram Plains North District, Eastern Region, Ghana.

METHODS

- **Design:** A descriptive cross-sectional study
- **Site:** 24 communities in the Islands (Tsetsekpo, Ntuabuma, Cedikorpe, Dwarf Island sub-districts) of Kwahu Afram Plains North District, Eastern Region of Ghana
- **Study tools:** Structured interviewer-administered questionnaire adapted from GDHS questionnaire
- **Measurements:** Anthropometry using standardized equipment while following standard procedures.
- **Data analysis:** SPSS version 24
- **Ethical approval:** Obtained from Ghana Health Service Ethics Review Committee (Protocol number GHS-ERC: 041/07/22)

RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the children

Variable	Frequency (n = 238)	Percent
Sex of the child		
Male	122	51.3
Female	116	48.7
Age group of children in months		
6 – 11	92	38.7
12 – 23	74	31.1
24 – 35	44	18.5
36 – 47	23	9.7
48 – 59	5	2.1
Mean ± SD = 17.5 ± 12.2		
Place of delivery		
Home	146	61.3
Health facility	92	38.7
Child weighed at birth		
Yes	86	36.1
No	152	63.9

RESULTS CONTINUED

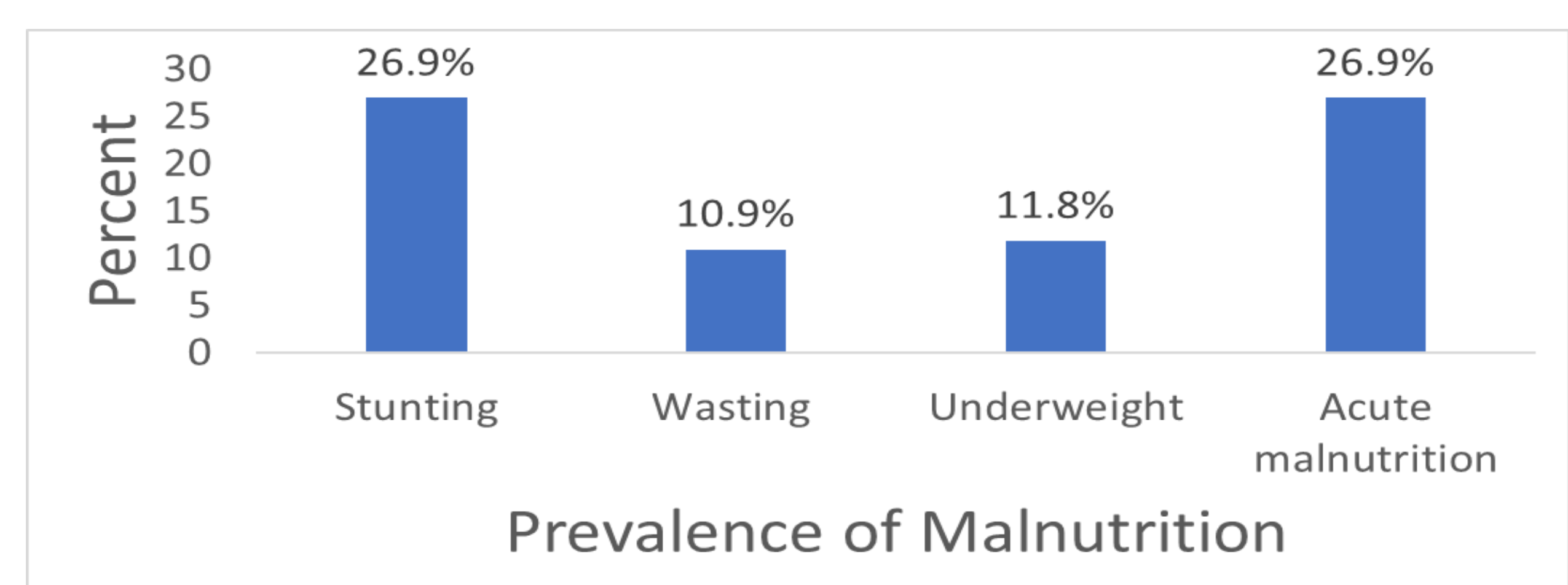


Figure 1: Prevalence of malnutrition among the children

Table 2: Predictors of stunting

Predictors	95% CI for OR				AOR	95% CI for OR		
	COR	Lower	Upper	P-value		Lower	Upper	P-value
Sex								
Male*	1				1			
Female	0.41	0.22	0.74	0.003	0.37	0.20	0.70	0.002
Breastfeeding								
Yes*	1				1			
No	2.53	1.37	4.70	0.003	2.62	1.38	4.97	0.003
Colostrum at birth								
Yes*	1				1			
No	3.41	1.18	9.82	0.002	4.36	1.41	13.48	0.011

Table 2: Predictors of acute malnutrition

Predictors	95% CI for OR				AOR	95% CI for OR		
	COR	Lower	Upper	P-value		Lower	Upper	P-value
Marital status of caregiver								
Not married*	1				1			
Married	0.43	0.23	0.81	0.009	3.08	1.17	8.09	0.023
Age group in months								
6 - 11*	1				1			
12 - 23	0.48	0.24	0.94	0.032	3.40	1.09	10.58	0.035
24 - 35	0.19	0.07	0.53	0.001	6.63	1.10	39.98	0.039

CONCLUSIONS

- The prevalence of malnutrition was high among the children studied
- Younger children aged of 6 -11 months had the highest prevalence of malnutrition.
- Dietary practices of the mothers/caregivers of the children were poor
- Age and sex of the children, colostrum feeding at birth, current breastfeeding status and marital status of mothers/caregivers were significant predictors of malnutrition
- Ghana, like many other SSA countries, is not on course towards the achievement of sustainable development goal (SDG) 2.2 which aims to “end all forms of malnutrition” and by implication, SDG 3 which aims to “ensure healthy lives, and promote wellbeing for all at all ages”

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