

### Socio-Demographic and Economic Characteristics, Dietary Intake, and Nutritional Status of Households with Children Aged 1-3 Years in Households in Seme Sub-County, Kenya

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#### Abstract

Despite several efforts by the Kenyan Government to resolve household food insecurity, Seme Sub-County still has a higher number of households reporting a lack of food or money to purchase food, which is at 41.9%. This rate is higher than the national proportion, which is at 36.2%. The region also has a higher under-five mortality rate at 72 deaths per 1000 live births compared to the national level of 52 deaths per 1000 live births. Despite the high death rate, Seme Sub-County mothers are still more than 50% likely to introduce complementary feeding early, which predisposes their children to a higher risk of undernutrition, including stunting, wasting, and being underweight. The objective of this study was to assess the demographic, socio-economic, dietary intake, and nutritional status of children aged 1-3 years in households in Seme Sub-County, Kenya. A total of 193 families with children aged 1-3 years were interviewed. A questionnaire was used to collect data on the socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the households. The nutritional status of the child was assessed using anthropometric assessment. Multiple linear regression was used to determine the relationship between dietary intake and nutritional status of children aged 1-3 years. Most children, 38.9%, were stunted, denoting chronic malnutrition and long-term food deprivation in Seme; others were underweight at 16.1%, whereas a few were wasted at 8.8%. These rates are higher than the national rates, where stunting is at 26%, wasting at 4%, and underweight at 11%. The high rates might be attributed to most mothers in Seme Sub-County introducing complementary feeding early, hence predisposing their children to undernutrition (stunting, underweight, wasting). It might also be due to poor consumption of Vitamin A-rich vegetables and tubers by the children, which is 15.6% and most households reporting a lack of food or money to purchase food at 41.9%, which is still higher than the national rate of 36.2%. Further, there was a statistically significant relationship between stunting and low dietary diversity,  $p=0.02$  in children aged 1-3 years, with chances of being stunted increasing by 12 in children aged 1-3 years consuming a lowly diversified diet, holding moderate diet diversity and high dietary diversity constant, (95%CI) =12(11.92,12.08). This discovery denoted that a child who ate a lowly diversified diet was most likely to be stunted.

**Keywords:** Nutritional status, dietary diversity, stunting, underweight, wasting