



新聞稿 PRESS RELEASE

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Research on Growth & Nutrition of Hong Kong Infants

According to a research undertaken by the Department of Paediatrics of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, most Hong Kong infants and children (under five years of age) are already adequately fed. Overfeeding may be more of a problem than underfeeding. In fact there is already evidence of obesity in Hong Kong children.

The "Growth and Nutrition Research Team" in the Department of Paediatrics, The Chinese University of Hong Kong was set up in 1984 to study the growth and nutritional status of Hong Kong infants. With the support and cooperation of many countries, the research team has obtained important results after six years' of intensive study.

Results of the research indicate that Hong Kong infants below two years of age are adequately fed. Infancy is the period of most rapid growth, thus adequate nutrition is crucial to infant growth, especially for weaning infants (aged half to two years). The weaning diet of Hong Kong infants was previously reported to be suboptimal. However, in the 80's when marked socio-economic changes took place, the nutritional value of Hong Kong infants' diet also improved. Measurements of infants' intake of energy, iron and vitamin D were satisfactory, and protein consumption was even two to four times that of the level recommended by the World Health Organization.

The research team has constructed the growth standards of weight, length and head circumference from data collected by a longitudinal study of 174 healthy infants from birth to five years of age. It was found that, compared to the 60's and 70's, Hong Kong infants has reached an optimal state of growth in the 80's. The research team also recommends that authorities concerned should set down a new set of growth standard (growth curve) for use by paediatricians in hospitals and clinics as the one now being used is based on surveys done in the 60's and is vastly different from the present situations.

The research team points out that the present dietary intake of Hong Kong infants is already adequate, and that if care is not exercised, overnutrition and fatness will occur. Parents usually pay much attention to infants' diets, but as these infants grow up, especially when they reach school age, they tend to be affected by the eating habit of their parents and by food commercials. In most cases, fat teenage students has been fat since childhood due to excessive intake of sugar, starch and fat starting from the early school years. Good eating habit, therefore, should be cultivated during childhood.

The Department of Paediatrics of The Chinese University will stage a "Growth and Nutrition" Exhibition at Seminar Room 1, 2/F, the Prince of Wales Hospital, Shatin tomorrow (December 1) from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm to share the above findings with the public.