

Malnutrition among 6–59 month – old children at district 2 hospital, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam: Prevalence and associated factors

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Objectives: Childhood malnutrition is major health concerns in many low and middle-income countries, including Vietnam. It was a major risk factor for child mortality and adult ill-health. Because malnutrition could increase to risk of serious infections, conversely current diseases also had a negative impact on the growth of child. This study therefore examine the prevalence of stunting and underweight among children aged 6 – 59 month –old outpatient children in District 2 hospital, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.

Methods: A cross-sectional study involved a sample of 225 children aged 6-59 months who were randomly selected at outpatient department in District 2 hospital. Anthropometric measurements and blood test of children were taken to assess the nutritional status and anaemia. The structured questionnaire was also applied to collect mothers and children's characteristics to examine associated risk factors.

Results: The prevalence of stunting, underweight, overweight and anaemia among children aged 6–59 months were 9.8%, 8.4%, 25.8% and 30.7%, respectively. Underweight was only significantly correlated to having breastfeeding in the first hour after birth (RR: 0.02; 95% CI: 0.01-0.17; $p < 0.001$), while stunting was related to age of starting complementary foods from equal to/more than 6 months (RR=0.70, 95% CI=0.50-0.99, $p < 0.05$) and normal birth weight (RR = 0.29, 95% CI = 0.15 - 0.56, $p < 0.001$).

Conclusions: This study emphasized the importance of measuring the overall nutritional status for children, who have accompanied infectious diseases and anaemia. The high prevalence of malnutrition and anaemia underlined the need for routine screening, as well as treatment on children. Additionally, health information strategies should be focusing on young child feeding practices to minimize stunting and underweight.

Biography: Huynh Giao is a Ph.D pediatrics and lecturer at the Faculty of Public Health, University of Medicine and Pharmacy at Ho Chi Minh City, and guide to practicing family medicine for medical students at Dist. 2 hospital. She had three papers on public health published in 2019 in journals such as Biomed Research International and Tropical disease and health and over ten papers published in prestigious journals in the country. Currently, she is conducting researches on non-communicable disease areas, including nutrition, diabetes, primary care fields.

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