

Contextualization of Middle Childhood Nutrition Guidelines in Sri Lanka; Situational Analysis

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Good nutrition during middle childhood (5 to 10 y) is important and should be emphasized. In Sri Lanka, significant levels of middle childhood malnutrition have been linked to poor eating habits. This study was conducted to examine the current nutritional condition of middle childhood in Sri Lanka and to investigate mothers' knowledge, attitude, and behavior (KAB) on meeting the nutritional needs of children in middle childhood. The available nutrition guidelines and existing data sources on nutrient status in middle childhood were examined. An online survey was conducted as a cross-sectional study to investigate KAB of mothers on fulfilling middle childhood nutrition requirements in Sri Lanka. The finding revealed that the mothers' levels of knowledge (66%) was moderate and attitudes (68%) was high as evaluated based on a scoring system prepared by the investigators. The attitude toward the behavior was found to have a significant effect ($p=0.003$). Although there was no significant effect of the mother's knowledge towards behavior, a significant correlation was observed between the mother's knowledge and attitude ($p=0.038$). There was no reliable Sri Lankan national data source for continuous statistics on the nutritional status of each age group of 5 to 10 y. In conclusion, the majority of mothers had high levels of positive attitudes toward middle childhood nutrition requirements and moderate level of general knowledge. In Sri Lanka, there were no specific nutrition guidelines aimed at middle childhood. These findings may serve as the basis for enhance the nutritional status of the respective age segment in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *child nutrition guidelines, malnutrition, knowledge, attitudes, behavior*