

**Prevalence of Malnutrition and Associated Factors among Children Aged 6-59 Months,
Born to Adolescents and Young Mothers in Otuke District, Northern Uganda**

Ogwang Oyom George

Mr. Aloka Bonny

Dr. Ritah Bakesiima

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ABSTRACT

Introduction

Children aged 6-59 months old are vulnerable to malnutrition, which can hinder growth, development, and increase their susceptibility to infections. This study aimed to assess the prevalence of malnutrition and associated factors among children, born to adolescents and young mothers in Otuke district.

Methodology: The study used community-based cross-sectional survey. 500 child-mother pairs were sampled using cluster multistage sampling technique. Anthropometric measurements were taken using standard nutritional tools. Data were analyzed with STATA version 17, applying logistic regression to examine associations, expressed as Adjusted Odds Ratios (AOR) with a 95% confidence level and statistical significance at $p < 0.05$.

Results: The study revealed a high burden of malnutrition in Otuke District, with 37.6% of children affected. Stunting affected 4.2% of children. Wasting was found in 13.2%, with more boys being affected than girls. Underweight prevalence was at 28.6%, higher in boys (34.3%). Maternal education was protective (AOR = 0.14, 95% CI: 0.04-0.52, $p = 0.003$), with children of educated mothers having reduced risk. Poor housing conditions and harmful cultural practices increased the risk (AOR = 3.34, 95% CI: 1.50-7.44, $p = 0.003$) and (AOR = 0.52, 95% CI: 0.31- 0.87, $p = 0.014$) respectively.

Conclusion: The study highlighted a high prevalence of malnutrition among children under five years, particularly among boys. It emphasized the importance of addressing underlying factors such as maternal education, housing conditions, and harmful cultural practices.

Recommendation: The study recommends targeted nutritional interventions to address root causes and reduce the burden of malnutrition in this vulnerable age group.

Keywords: Prevalence, Malnutrition, Associated Factors, Children Aged 6-59 Months, Born to Adolescents, Young Mothers, Otuke District, Northern Uganda.