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Predictors of nutritional status of Ethiopian adolescent girls: A community based cross sectional study

Azeb Atenafu
University of Gondar, Ethiopia

Malnutrition is a major health issue affecting children, women and adolescents globally and developing countries in particular. Adolescence is a time of enormous physiological, cognitive, and psychosocial change but it remains a neglected, difficult-to-measure and hard-to-reach population. The critical role of adolescent nutrition in the intergenerational cycle of growth failure has not been well addressed in Ethiopia. Hence, this study assesses level of low BMI-for- age and height-for-age and their associated factors among adolescent girls in northwest Ethiopia. Community based cross-sectional quantitative study was employed. A total of 1281 adolescent girls were included in the study. Multistage cluster sampling method was used. Pretested questionnaire were used to collect the data. The collected data were entered in to Epi Info version 3.5.3 and exported to SPSS version 20.0 software packages for further statistical analysis. The data were analyzed using bivariate and multivariate logistic regression. The degree of association between dependent and independent variables were assessed using odds ratio with 95% confidence interval and variables with p value ≤0.05 were considered significant. The prevalence of girls with BMI-for-age Z-score<-2 were 13.6% and height-for-age Z-score<-2 were 31.5%. Being in the age group 10-14 years (AOR=5.83, 95% CI: 3.26, 10.44), being in the age group 15-17 years (AOR=2.06, 95% CI: 1.09, 3.89), with poor dietary diversity score (AOR=2.48, 95% CI: 1.60, 3.84), utilizing community based nutrition service (AOR=0.67, 95% CI: 0.47, 0.95) were factors significantly associated with thinness in adolescent girls. Being on the age group 10-14 years (AOR=6.07, 95% CI: 4.00, 9.22), being on the age group 15-17 years (AOR=1.39, 95% CI: 1.93, 2.09) had nutrition and health information (AOR=1.94, 95% CI: 1.46, 2.57), living in food secured households (AOR=0.65, 95% CI: 0.50, 0.84) were factors affecting low height-for-age in study subjects. Finding of this study indicated that prevalence of adolescents with low BMI-for-age and low height-for-age Z-score<-2 were high. Age, dietary diversity score and community based nutrition service utilization were factors affecting low BMI-for-age in adolescent girls. Age, food insecurity and nutrition and health information were factors affecting low height-for-age in adolescent girls. Improving community based nutrition service utilization, food security especially in young adolescents is highly recommended.

Biography

Azeb Atenafu has completed her Bachelor's degree in Public Health and Sociology and Master's degree in Public Health Nutrition and Sociology from University of Gondar, Ethiopia. She is a Public Health Nutritionist and a Sociologist. She has published six papers in reputed journals and has more than four years of work experience. She is an Assistant Professor in Public Health Nutrition in University of Gondar Human Nutrition Department and has been actively involved in teaching, research and community services besides serving the department as the Head and participating in numerous affairs of the university at large.

bemnyaz@gmail.com

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