

Assessment of Nutritional Status and Adequacy of Dietary Intake among Institutionalized Elders in Galle

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Abstract

Introduction: Elderly population is a group vulnerable for malnutrition, especially those living in institutions. Assessment of food intake and provision of appropriate nutrition is essential for improvement of their health status. Aim: To determine the nutritional status and adequacy of dietary intake among inmates of selected elders' homes in Galle district. **Method:** A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted among institutionalized elders from selected elders' homes in Galle district. A sample of 129 elders with a good recall of the previous day's diet were recruited and the 24-hour dietary recall method was used to assess dietary intake. Adequacy of intake of different food groups was determined, based on the minimum number of servings of each food group recommended for Sri Lankan population. The nutritional status of the elders was assessed using Mini Nutritional Assessment (MNA). **Results:** Study participants had a mean age of 71.9±10.5 years: Of them, 72.9% were female and 27.1% were male. According to MNA, 37.2% of them were malnourished, 50.4% were at risk for malnutrition and only 12.4% were well nourished. The 24-hour dietary recall revealed that, only 36% and 53% of the sample received adequate number of servings of carbohydrates and proteins respectively. Fruit and vegetable intake was inadequate in over 97% of them. Over 95% of the elders did not receive adequate amounts of dairy products. More males consumed adequate amounts of protein, compared to females (88.6% vs. 39.4%; $p < 0.001$), however, carbohydrate intake was similar in both groups. Age of the inmates did not show any association with adequacy of dietary intake. **Conclusions and recommendations:** Nutritional status is not satisfactory among the inmates of elders' homes in Galle. An inadequate intake of all major food groups was observed. Proper menu planning, regular nutritional assessment and correction of deficiencies should be carried out to ensure good nutritional status of elders.

Keywords: dietary intake, institutionalized elders, MNA, nutritional assessment, Sri Lanka

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