

## **Breakfast Skipping: Associated Factors and Its Effect on Academic Performances of School Children in the Zonal Education Division-Galle**

Madusanka P.D.K.<sup>1#</sup>, Rodrigo M.<sup>2</sup>, Darshana I.L.A.N.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

<sup>3</sup>*Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka*

*#Corresponding author: kamalmadu.ath@gmail.com*

**Background:** Breakfast is considered as the most important meal of the day. However, it was identified as the mostly skipping meal of the day, especially among children. Regular breakfast consumption helps to maintain benefit toward academic performances among school going children.

**Objective:** To study breakfast skipping pattern and its effect on academic performances among school children in Zonal Education Division, Galle

**Methods:** A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 280 school children in selected three grades (Grade 8, 9 & 10) in selected popular schools in Zonal Education Division, Galle. The sample was selected using convenient sampling method. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect information on breakfast habits. Dietary recall method was used to obtain information on the children's food intake. Academic performances were measured using average marks obtained for the term test. Data analysis was done using statistical package of social science version 25. Level of significance was considered as 0.05.

**Results:** Nearly half of the sample was boys (n = 145, 51.8%). Mean ( $\pm$ SD) age of the students was 14.1( $\pm$ 0.7) years. Breakfast skipping was identified among 25% (n = 70) of students. Lack of time (n = 45, 64.3%), lack of appetite (n = 19, 27.2%), less variety of foods (n = 2, 2.8%) and unavailability of breakfast (n = 4, 5.7%) were identified as leading causes for breakfast skipping. Majority (n = 45, 64.3%) of breakfast skippers was girls. Being a female ( $p < 0.05$ ) and occupation of breadwinner ( $p < 0.05$ ) were associated with breakfast skipping. According to this study, no significant association was identified with breakfast skipping and academic performance of the children in Zonal Education Division-Galle ( $p = 0.51$ ).

**Conclusions:** Breakfast skipping was identified in considerable proportion among school children in the sample. Although, study did not identify significant association with breakfast skipping and academic performance, study recommend the need of further studies with large samples for detailed assessment on effects of breakfast skipping on academic performance.

**Keywords:** *Academic performance, Breakfast skipping, School children*