

DIETARY PATTERN IN ASSOCIATION WITH HEALTH AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF THE FARMERS OF DISTRICT MARDAN

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The study was design to explore the dietary pattern in association with health and nutritional status of the farmers of the district Mardan. Out of 60 rural union councils of District Mardan, randomly 20 union councils were selected. Out of 20 union councils 1200 farmers who were free from any chronic and infectious disease, with the age above 20 years and dynamically carrying out the agricultural actions were recruited. The physical measurements of the farmers were measured by taking their height, weight, triceps skin fold thickness and mid upper arm circumference (MUAC). Caliper was used to measure the Triceps skin fold (TSF) thickness. Hemoglobin and blood glucose were assessed. Data on dietary intake from both mal- and well-nourished groups were collected using a pre-tested food frequency questionnaire. Almost half of the farmers (49%) used to work either in their farms or involved in farm related activities on daily basis with average working of 6 hours. The average weight, height, body mass index (BMI), MUAC and TSF of the farmers were 66.4 kg, 169 cm, 23.4, 27.4cm and 10.6 mm respectively. Similarly, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, random sugar and mean blood hemoglobin were 120 and 78 mmHg, 144 and 13.9 g/dl respectively. Use of pills/medicines was higher in malnourished than in normal farmers ($p < 0.01$). Similarly, higher number of malnourished than normal farmers reported to get fatigue after short physical activity in the farm ($p < 0.05$). Malnourished group consumed most of the nutrients rich food items in lesser quantity than well-nourished group. Meat based diets and fresh fruits were consumed with small amount by the malnourished group compared to normal farmers. Some of the nutrients-rich food items such as green leafy vegetables, pulses and nuts were consumed with lesser quantity by malnourished group than control ($p < 0.065$). Moderate to strong positive correlations of dietary intake of nutrients-rich food items were found with farmers' blood Hb level, productivity and net revenue generated from the previous wheat crop. All the anthropometric and biochemical measurements of the farmers were in the normal range with averages. Nutritious food items were mostly used for marketing purpose or were not commonly consumed adequately due to lack of nutritional awareness.

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