

# SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC AND FEEDING CORRELATES OF ACUTE MALNUTRITION AMONG INFANTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN (0-36 MONTHS): A COMMUNITY BASED CASE CONTROL STUDY IN PESHAWAR

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A community-based, matched case control study was conducted during Mar' 2016 - Sep' 2017 on 422 (211 each in case and control group) children ( $\leq 36$  months). The study was aimed to investigate the sociodemographic and feeding correlates of acute malnutrition. Food insecurity status was determined using the FAO recommended Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) tool and families' wealth index profiles were estimated using pretested questionnaire. Children were categorized in three age groups ( $\leq 12$  months, 13-24 months and  $>24$  months) because of age related variations in feeding types and practices, physical, physiological and behavioral characteristics. Data was entered and analyzed in SPSS software. Feedings patterns for each age group were identified by principal component analysis. Differences in sociodemographic and feeding characteristics among the case-control were investigated using conditional logistic regression and Chi-square tests.  $P < 0.05$  was considered significant in all analyses. Among the sociodemographic and maternal factors, monthly income from all sources, wealth index score, child spacing, mothers body mass index (BMI), food insecurity status and total number of family members (sharing the same kitchen) showed unadjusted associations with child nutritional status; however child spacing (Adj. OR: 2.07; 95% CI: 1.45 – 2.89), mothers' BMI (Adj. OR: 1.67; 95% CI: 1.05–3.54), food insecurity status (Adj. OR: 0.56; 95% CI: 0.12–0.87) and family income (Adj. OR: 3.16; 95% CI: 1.95–5.18) remained significant in the multivariate analysis. An increased risk of acute malnutrition was evident in  $<12$  children having higher adherence to the high dairy/fat and lower adherence to the breast milk/high protein feeding patterns. High dairy protein and diversified/mixed pattern had negative association with acute malnutrition in children of age 13-24 month and  $>24$  months respectively. The study concluded that Mothers' health and appropriate feeding practices and patterns may significantly contribute to reduce the risk of acute malnutrition among the vulnerable group of young children.

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