

Summary

Malnutrition is not merely one of the greatest public health problems in the world today , it is also both a result and a cause of social and economic underdevelopment . Malnutrition may end , in early life , by physical and mental impairment .

The study aims at throwing some light on malnutrition in the first two years of life and its relation to maternal beliefs and customs in Kalyobia governorate and to suggest an applicable programme to lower the prevalence of malnutrition .

The Study was carried out on 1000 infants, during the period 1987 - 1989 The infants aged up to 24 months were selected by the systematic random sample from those attending for compulsory vaccinations in four primary health care outlets Sheblunga , Kafir Shokr , Benha and Tokh .

Every infant was subjected to detailed questionnaire filled by interview with their mothers , clinical examination , anthropometric (weight / age) measurments and blood Hb assessment .

The results of the study can be summarized as follows :

- 1- The prevalance of malnutrition among the studied infants was 58.9% .
- 2- As regard to the sociobiological and cultural factors affecting malnutrition , it was found that malnutrition was more common among : The age group 12 - 18 months (74.6%) , the fourth infant and more (74.8%) , infants who did not feed colostrum (88.3%) , when duration of milk feeding is less than 8 months (68.8%) and when mothers did not give any meal to the infant at night (83.8%) . Also , infants of illitrate mothers (70.5%) whose age less than 16 years old (79.2%) and of lower socioeconomic classes (71.8%) are highly exposed to malnutrition . Also , it was more frequent when : Weaning was practicized after the sixth month of age (85.4%) , weaning on more carbohydrates and less proteins (76.6%) , the infant

sharing the family food in a communal dish (80%) , when there was a history of recurrent diarrhea (71.7%) , when the mothers have false beliefs about the cause of the disease (79.1%) , and practiced traditional treatment of diseases (84.5%) . Also , malnutrition was more common when : treatment of disease occurred at late stages (65.2%) , mothers stop feeding during diarrhea (88.2%) , Vaccination was irregular (75.3%) , unhygienic practices were followed during preparation of food (88.1%) , and when the source of nutrition education was inadequate (63.8%) . The forms of malnutrition were : PEM (29.9%) , anaemia (29.7%) , multiple deficiencies (18.6%) , rickets (2.2%) and overweight (15.7%) . Also , mothers believed that good diet , Helba and Halawa Tehinia increase the flow of breast milk while Molokhia , Fish and Contraceptive Pills decrease it

3- Accordingly , the study recommends the application of program of health education the change for knowledge , attitude and practices of mothers about nutrition and feeding of their infants to lower the prevalence of malnutrition in Kalyobia .