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The maintenance of a well-balanced diet necessary to promote growth at various stages of a child's development: A case study in Ashanti region, Ghana



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Nutrition is important for providing energy for our daily activities, maintaining body functions, growth and development and therapeutic benefits including healing and prevention. Right nutrition in early days of life is very important and nutritional requirements are different for infants, children, adolescent and adults in the family (WHO, 2006). The main objective of this study was to understand, recognize and appreciate ideal nutrition to promote growth at various stages of child's development in Ashanti region, Ghana.

The target populations for this study were infants, children, adolescents and nursing mothers. The sample size was 700 consisting of 200 infants, 200 children, 200 adolescents and 100 nursing mother's in Ashanti region of Ghana. Purposive sampling was used to identify out target population. The respondents were interviewed by the use of questionnaires.

Some of the data taken on nursing mothers were: underweight: BMI <18.50; normal weight: 18.50 - 24.99; overweight: BMI 25.00 - 29.99 and obesity: BMI \geq 30 using the WHO (2011) body mass index (BMI); background information such as woman's household situation and living conditions; information of the anthropometrical measurements of both nursing mothers and children. Also, background and intake of foods and drinks among the infants, children and adolescents were recorded. The children's z-scores were calculated using Smart for Emergency Nutrition Assessment (ENA) ("ENA software", 2009)

The results suggest that the women and children are facing several nutritional and health challenges. Again, the studies revealed that relatively many children were malnourished in some way, stunted, wasted and/or underweight. The prevalence of exclusive (and predominant) breastfeeding was low and many children were given complimentary feeds.

Biography

Richard Essel Mensah is a graduate from the University of Ghana Medical School with MB ChB Doctorate Degree. He is an Anaesthesia Physician working at the Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Unit of Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital under the Ghana Health Service.

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