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Malnutrition in Colombian and Venezuelan hospitalized children under five years of age

Gilma Olaya Vega and **Carolina Clavijo**
Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia

Introduction: Malnutrition in hospitalized children could be undetected with negative effects on health recovery, growth, length of stay and costs.

Objective: To identify nutritional status in Colombian and Venezuelan hospitalized children <5 years of age.

Methods: A cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted with a convenience sample admitted at the hospital UEM in Cucuta, Colombia. Socio-demographic variables was recorded in a questionnaire, nutritional assessment was performed using anthropometric measurements (weight, length/height, head circumference and mid upper arm circumference). Food consumption was assessed using a food frequency questionnaire and physical examination to identify edema.

Analysis: Data is presented as mean (standard deviations), proportions and chi square (significance $p < 0.05$).

Results: Sample size was 99 children, 45% Venezuelan migrant children and 55% Colombian children, 54.5% girls, and 45.5% boys. 19.2% were infants <6mo, infants, 56.6% infants 6 to 24 months and 24.2% children from 2 to 5 years of age. Undernutrition was common 20.2% (20/99) suffer severe acute malnutrition (13.1% suffer Kwashiorkor, 6.1 marasmus and 1.1% kwashiorkor-marasmus). 10.1% moderate acute malnutrition and 34.3% were stunting (height-length for age <2SD). The highest prevalence of severe acute malnutrition 13.1% (13/99), $p < 0.05$ and stunting 19% ($p < 0.002$) was in Venezuelan children. The main cause of hospitalization was respiratory infection in infants <24mo and gastrointestinal infections in children 2 to 5 years of age. There was lower consumption with statistical significant difference of milk diary products ($p = 0.01$), meat ($p = 0.02$), fruits ($p = 0.007$) and vegetables ($p = 0.01$) in Venezuelan children.

Conclusion: Severe and moderate acute malnutrition was common situation that needs further investigation.

Biography

Gilma Olaya Vega has completed her PhD at the University College London. She is the Director of Nutrition and Biochemistry Department, Pontificia Universidad Javeriana. Her research is focus on mother and infant nutrition with the main interest in malnutrition, breastfeeding, complementary feeding and micronutrient (iron zinc) deficiencies. She has been recognized for her research with national awards and one international award.

gilma.olaya@javeriana.edu.co

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