



Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Mothers of Children Suffering from Acute Malnutrition Aged 6 to 59 Months Seen in Consultation at the Tillabéry Mother and Child Center in Niger.

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Malnutrition is a ubiquitous public health problem in developing countries, where it mainly affects young children. According to UNICEF, in Niger, acute malnutrition is more present among younger children.

Objectives: Our objective was to evaluate the socio-demographic characteristics of children suffering from acute malnutrition aged 6 to 59 months seen in consultation at the mother and child center of Tillabéry in Niger.

Materials and Methods: A questionnaire was administered to the mothers of the children after obtaining their consent using a non-probability method and then the data were processed using Word and Excel software.

Results: The study shows that 50% of mothers are aged between 18 and 29 years, 92.3% of women were married and 69.23% of mothers are housewives.

Conclusion: Improving the socio-economic conditions of the population of Tillabéry will help reduce chronic malnutrition among children under five years old.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Children, Tillabéry

Introduction

Malnutrition is a ubiquitous public health problem in developing countries, where it mainly affects young children. It is universally recognized that it has disastrous consequences for the health and development of individuals and populations in most countries where this problem is endemic. It is one of the causes of infant mortality worldwide. Despite excess food production, malnutrition rates remain very high and constitute a major public health problem.

According to UNICEF, in Niger, acute malnutrition is more present among younger children. In fact, it affects approximately twice as many children aged 6 to 23 months (26.3%) as children aged 24 to 59 months (11.8%).

In view of the above, we set ourselves the objective of evaluating the socio-demographic characteristics of children suffering from acute malnutrition aged 6 to 59 months seen in consultation at the mother and child center of Tillabéry in Niger.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive study was conducted from July 10 to October 10, 2023, and the target population was mothers of children aged 6 to 59 months suffering from acute malnutrition. A total of 65 mothers of children seen in consultation at the Tillabéry mother and child center were chosen using the non-probabilistic method. A questionnaire was administered to the mothers of the children after obtaining their consent.

Included in the study are all mothers of children aged 6 to 59 months present at pediatrics at the time of the study and whose child is included in the acute malnutrition management program.

Not considered are mothers whose children are not in the malnutrition management program, mothers whose child's age is not between 6 to 59 months, those absent at the time of the survey or who refused to participate in the study.

The data from the survey were obtained by administering a questionnaire to each of 65 respondents. The results presented in table form were made using Word software and in graph form using Excel software, according to the variables and objectives of the study.

Results

The results of our study are presented in the following tables: The **first table** presents the age of mothers. In fact, more than half (51%) of the respondents are aged between 18 and 29 years old. The **table 2** show the result of the origin of mothers. Thus, 60% come from the village. The results of our study in **table 3** show that 87% were Multiparous mothers. In **table 4** most women were married (92%) and 4% were divorced and widowed. The 4% were single.

Table 1: Distribution of mothers by age

Mothers age	Number	%
18 to 29 old	33	51
>30 old	32	49
Total	65	100

Table 2: Distribution of mothers according to place of residence

Origin of Mothers	Number	%
Village	39	60
City	26	40
Total	65	100

Table 3: Distribution of mothers according to place of residence

Origin of Mothers	Number	%
First-time mother	11	17
Multiparous mother	54	83
Total	65	100

Table 4: Distribution according to marital status

Origin of Mothers	Number	%
Single	3	4
Married	60	92
Widowed	1	2
Divorced	1	2
Total	65	100

Table 5: Distribution according to marriage regime

Marriage regime	Number	%
Monogamy	44	68
Polygamy	21	32
Total	65	100

Discussion

A mother's sociodemographic indicators have a significant impact on the nutritional status of the child in general and on the prevention and management of malnutrition in particular.

The results of our study show that 50% of mothers are aged between 18 and 29 years old. This result is consistent with Niger statistics which show a very young population with early marriages for young girls. Indeed, according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 30% of girls are married before the age of 15 and 75% before the age of 18.

It appears from this study that 60% of respondents come from surrounding villages. This could be explained by the fact that the mother and child center is a reference center. The result shows that 83% of the respondents are multiparous mothers. This proportion seems to be very high given the risk of health complications. Indeed, grand multiparity remains a risk during pregnancy and is associated with an increased prevalence of maternal and neonatal complications (poor presentation, meconium fluid, placenta previa and low Apgar score) compared to other multiparous women who gave birth at I Muhimbili National Hospital.

Concerning the marital status of mothers, the results obtained show that 92.3% of women were married. These results are slightly higher than those found by Affaf (88% in 2012 in Chad). This high proportion of married people could be explained by the weight of the Islamic religion which does not allow women to give birth before marriage.

In fact, 69.23% of mothers are housewives. These results are corroborated by statistics from the Nigerien government which states that women are the most affected by unemployment with a rate of 25% compared to 12% for men while the age group of 15 to 29 is the lowest. hit by unemployment. The same source indicates that the employment situation in Niger is very poor due to very strong demographic growth, the inadequacy between the training received and the real needs of businesses and the weakness of the economic fabric.

Conclusion:

In this study, we examined the socio-demographic characteristics of children suffering from acute malnutrition in the Tillabéry region of Niger. The results revealed that half of the mothers of the studied children were aged 18 to 29 years old, and a large majority were married and homemakers. These findings highlight the importance of considering socio-economic factors in the prevention and management of childhood malnutrition.

To effectively combat chronic malnutrition among children under five years old in this region, measures aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the population are necessary. This could include economic development programs and women's empowerment initiatives, as well as efforts to enhance access to adequate nutrition and quality healthcare services.

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