

## **Abstract**

This study explored the extent to which morbidity in 110 mildly to moderately malnourished Kenyan toddlers was associated with developmental outcomes. Morbidity information was collected from the 18th to 30th months. Concurrent assessments of vocalization, play, and performance on the Bayley scales were obtained. At 5 years, a follow-up battery of cognitive tests was administered. Female toddlers who suffered more illness generally performed less well on developmental measures than their healthier female peers. These children vocalized and played less and performed less well on the Bayley Mental scales at 30 months and on the cognitive battery at 5 years. For the boys, development was largely independent of morbidity. Morbidity was related to patterns of care giving for both boys and girls, but it was not associated with socioeconomic status or food intake. However, girls who were ill more often were shorter and lighter. Relations between morbidity and development in the girls remained statistically significant when other variables, which were also related to development (such as care giving, socioeconomic status, parental IQ and literacy, food intake, and anthropometry) were considered. This suggests that morbidity, in these female toddlers, had an effect on development above and beyond other variables typically associated with malnutrition.