

## **Abstract**

The relationship between mild to moderate malnutrition, as measured by food intake and anthropometric status, and developmental outcome was explored in 110 Kenyan toddlers. Developmental outcome was assessed at 30 months of age by the Bayley Mental and Motor scales and by evaluation of play behaviors. Verbalization and play during months 15 to 30 were also evaluated. Family background and home rearing conditions were assessed, and these variables were separated from the correlations between nutrition and outcome by partial correlation methods. Food intake was related to anthropometric status, play behaviors, and total amount of verbalization and play even when the potentially confounding effects of certain family background and home rearing variables were covaried. Food intake was not related to Bayley Mental and Motor scores, but measures of length and weight were, even when family background and home rearing variables were held constant. Mild to moderate malnutrition does appear to affect the child's development adversely even when other environmental characteristics, which also relate to development, are considered