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AN ANTHROPOMETRIC STUDY OF CHILDREN WITH SICKLE CELL ANAEMIA AT  
THE KENYATTA NATIONAL HOSPITAL, NAIROBI.

By

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SUMMARY

Weights, heights, upper-mid-arm circumference, skinfold-thickness and head circumference measurements were recorded in a cross-sectional study of 256 children with sickle-cell anaemia aged between 5½ months and 14 years. The children were grouped into high and low socio-economic class using their fathers' educational background and the type of job. Compared with 172 normal controls, weight was significantly less at all ages; the average height of younger patients was significantly less but that of older patients was close to that of controls. Weight and height were more favourable for the high compared with the low socio-economic class sicklers. The same trend was observed in the upper-mid-arm circumference and skinfold-thickness measurements. Head circumference measurements showed high mean values in favour of the sicklers, the low socio-economic class sicklers showing the highest scores.

Although there were sexual differences in achieved growth, this had no relationship with either socio-economic status or the sickle-cell disease. It appears that sickle-cell-anaemia accounts for some degree of physical retardation and malnutrition in the affected children. It is felt that as the standards of living improve better social circumstances will lead to better physical growth of the sickle-cell anaemia patients. Meanwhile emphasis in management should be placed in improved nutrition, prevention and treatment of intercurrent infections and anaemia.