

Nutrition and public hygiene among children under five years of age in Mukuru slums of Makadara division, Nairobi

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Abstract

Objective: To determine the relationship between sanitation and malnutrition among children below five years. Design: A random sampling followed by an experimental design on microbiological analysis of food and water samples. Setting: Mukuru slums of Makadara division in Nairobi City. Subjects: Eighty food and thirty water samples from households within the study area were used. Results: Poor food and personal hygiene were observed within the households in the study area. Most of the respondents did not practice hygienic methods during food handling such as washing hands and vegetables before preparation. Food especially the leftovers was served at ambient temperatures. Sneezing and coughing over food during preparation were also a common practice which exposed consumers to contamination, Garbage disposal and proper drainage were also poor deepening on the sanitation problem. Microbiological analysis of water and food revealed that *Escherichia coli* (E-coli) and *Salmonella* spp. pathogens which are known causes of diarrhoea in children under five years of age. Conclusion: Poor hygienic and unsanitary practices are major causes of diarrhoea, hence malnutrition in crowded Mukuru slums of Nairobi City.