

## Abstract

**Background:** Malnutrition is a major public health problem in Uganda affecting the children's physical growth and cognitive development which consequently impacts on their health and survival.

**Objective:** To establish the factors influencing the nutritional status of children under five in Namuwongo Slum, Makindye Division, Kampala District in order to suggest practical interventions that would improve on the health status of children.

**Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was carried out with researcher administered questionnaires and anthropometric measurements as methods of data collection from 294 respondents. Descriptive, bivariate analyses were undertaken in SPSS and frequency tables, graphs, pie charts, and p values were generated. Z scores were generated using Epi Data software.

**Results:** From the findings, 55.1%, 26.3% and 18.6% of children under five in Namuwongo were stunted, underweight and wasted respectively. Chronic malnutrition was the most prevalent form of malnutrition. Level of household income, birth interval, the biological relationship of the child to the caregiver, level of education, marital status, caregivers' nutritional knowledge, caregivers' food preparation practices, hygiene practices of the caregiver, duration of exclusive breastfeeding, initiation of complementary foods, child's dietary intake and household food security were revealed as key predictors in the nutritional status of children under five.

**Conclusions:** Malnutrition is a major problem among children under five years of age in Namuwongo slum that is influenced by the socio-economic status of households, caregiver's childcare practices and household food insecurity. Therefore interventions to combat the problem should be holistic, multi-sectoral and targeted at both women and men in the community.