

Malnutrition spectrum of children younger than five years age admitted with pneumonia at the inpatient department of Agha Khan University Hospital

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Malnutrition is one of the major risk factors related to pneumonia in children younger than 5 years of age. Undernutrition in a child with severe pneumonia requiring hospitalization can be associated with a diminished metabolic capacity to overcome physical and physiological demands of the illness, such as increased temperature, cardiac output and work of breathing. Consequently, the presence of severe acute malnutrition can increase mortality from pneumonia. Worldwide there are about 60 million children, with moderate acute and 13 million with severe acute malnutrition. About 9% of Sub-Saharan African and 15% of South Asian children have moderate acute malnutrition. Globally, pneumonia is the leading cause of death in young children and burden of disease is disproportionately high in South East Asia. Pneumonia is common in malnourished children and is frequently associated with fatal outcome especially in children younger than 24 months of age.

The aim of this study is, improved understanding of the critical links between pneumonia and undernutrition.

Methodology: All children of either gender with admitting diagnoses of pneumonia and younger than 5 years of age and more than one month of age were included. Demographic features were recorded on a pre-designed proforma and WHO calculator used for standard deviation.

Results: Among 381 children enrolled in this study, females were 120 (32%) while 261 (68%) were males. Infants (one month to 12 months of age) were 225 (60%) while 156 (40%) were more than 12 months to 60 months of age. Presence of stunting was observed in 75 (20%), wasting in 95 (25%), underweight in 147 (39%) and over-weight in 9 (3%).

In this study, stunting, wasting and under-weight was more prevalent in females. Comparison of leading factors with respect to baseline characteristics was done. Children younger than 5 years of age (infants and older children) both were underweight but compared to infants (one month to 12 months age), older children (more than 12 months) were found to be more underweight.

Conclusions: Most of the children were under-weight followed by wasting, stunting and over-weight. Malnutrition including moderate and severe malnutrition was important risk factor in children younger than 5 years of age admitted with pneumonia in tertiary care Agha Khan University Hospital.

Increased attention and most important is resources directed at improving prevention as well as early identification and treatment of undernourished children with pneumonia is crucial. These children need close

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follow up to record the improvement after the intervention. Maternal and paternal education is must in this regard.

Biography

Syeda Asma Sherazi is currently working in a Tertiary Care Hospital where she gets exposure of different kind and severity of pediatric patients. She has special interest in malnutrition as this is one of the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in developing countries. She firmly believes that well nourish child in early years of life can contribute towards a healthy society and nation building in future with focused, appropriate planning, effective intervention and execution. This need more attention on national as well as international level.