Prevalence and Associated Factors of Stunting and Thinness among Adolescent Students in Finote Selam Town, Northwest Ethiopia

Damitie Kebede[1, 2], Reddy P. C. J. Prasad[1], Degnet Teferi Asres[1], Hayat Aragaw[1], Eyerusalem Worku[1]

[1]Department of Applied Human Nutrition, Faculty of Chemical and Food Engineering, Bahir Dar Institute of Technology, *P O Box,79, Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia*

[2]*College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, P O Box, 5501, Bahir Dar University, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia*

Abstract

Background: Under-nutrition among adolescents is a major public health problem in developing nations including Ethiopia. Adolescents need to have good quantity and quality nutrient to cope with this rapid growth and other health risks which increase nutritional demand. This study aimed to assess the prevalence and associated factors of stunting and thinness among school adolescents in Finote Selam town, northwest Ethiopia.

Methods: A school-based cross-sectional study among adolescent students aged 10-19 in public schools was carried out in Finote Selam town from February 05 to March 27, 2018. A total of 397 school adolescents were included in this study. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select study subjects. Pre-tested structured questionnaires were used to collect the data. Data was entered using Epi info version 7 and analyzed using SPSS version 20 and WHO Anthro Plus software. A multivariable logistic regression analysis was employed to identify factors associated with stunting and thinness. Crude and adjusted odds ratios with 95% level significance were used to measure the strength of association, and statistical significance was declared at a p-value less than 0.05.

Results: The prevalence of stunting and thinness among school adolescents were 21.8% and 16.9%, respectively. About 9.7% of school adolescents experienced both stunting and thinness. Being male (P = 0.031), coming from rural area (P = 0.046), having a family monthly income of less than $28.37 (P = 0.044) and having less than four dietary diversity (P = 0.021) were significantly associated with stunting. Early adolescent stage (P = 0.034), being male adolescent students (P = 0.37), having a family monthly income of less than $28.37 (P = 0.016), having a family monthly income between $28.37 -$56.74 (P = 0.021) (35.25 Birr =1 USD) and using well water (P = 0.045) were significantly associated with thinness.

Conclusion: Under-nutrition was a predominant problem in the study area. Sex, age, place of residence, dietary diversity, sources of drinking water and family monthly income were important factors associated with stunting and thinness among the respondents. Strategies to improve the nutritional status of adolescent students should be given much attention.

Keywords: Adolescent students, Anthropometry, Stunting, Thinness, Ethiopia.