Sociodemographic Determinants of Stunting and Wasting in Children Under Two Years of Age Born During the COVID-19 Period

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic had significant indirect effects on maternal and child health; however, the growth status of children born during this period has not been well explored. The present study aimed to assess the nutritional status of children born during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify sociodemographic factors associated with malnutrition among children under 24 months of age in Vidisha district, Madhya Pradesh.

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among children aged 6–24 months who were born during the COVID-19 pandemic and attended the immunization centre of a tertiary care hospital for vaccination. Anthropometric measurements including weight and length were recorded. Nutritional indices such as weight-for-length, weight-for-age, and length-for-age were calculated and converted into Z-scores using World Health Organization growth standards. Data were analysed using Microsoft Excel 2016 and the OpenEpi statistical calculator. Continuous variables were expressed as mean ± standard deviation, while categorical variables were presented as percentages. Wasting (weight-for-length Z-score < −2) was observed in 19.4% of male children and 7.4% of female children. Stunting (length-for-age Z-score < −2) was present in 35.5% of males and 33.3% of females, while underweight (weight-for-age Z-score < −2) was observed in 29% of males and 27.8% of females. Overall, 34.69% of children were stunted and 26.4% were wasted. Maternal education, family income, gestational age, and breastfeeding duration were significantly associated with child nutritional status.

Index Terms

Covid-19 Related Issues, Wasting, Underweight, Stunting, India, Children