

Low Dietary Diversity Among Children Aged 6 To 23 Months in Three Regions in Togo: Need of Nutritional Interventions

Mamy Eklou

Higher School of Biological and Food Techniques (ESTBA), University of Lomé, Togo

Gott'liebe M. Goka

Higher School of Biological and Food Techniques (ESTBA), University of Lomé, Togo

Komlan D. Serges Takou

School of Medical Assistants (EAM), University of Lomé, Togo

Mamatchi Melila

Faculty of Science (FDS), University of Lomé, Togo

Kous'anta S. Amouzou

Faculty of Science and Technology, (FaST), Université de Kara, Togo

Abstract:

Dietary diversity refers to the consumption of foods from different food groups, which is essential to ensure that children get enough nutrients. However, the situation is still critical in Togo, with only 12% of children aged between 6 and 23 months fed according to optimal infant and young child feeding practices (IYCF). The available data on the feeding of these children must therefore be analyzed to gain a better understanding of the situation and to guide actions aimed at improving the nutrition of these children in Togo. Consequently, this study aims to explore the dietary diversity of children aged between 6 and 23 months in the Savanes, Kara and Maritime regions of Togo, using data from the SMART 2022 survey. The sample comprised 620 children. The results show that global acute malnutrition affects 12.1% of children in the Savanes region, compared with 10.3% in Kara and 11.9% in the Maritime region. Chronic malnutrition is particularly alarming in Kara, with a rate of 25%, compared with 20.9% in the Savanes and 21.5% in the Maritime region. Rates of underweight follow a similar trend, peaking at 23.5% in the Kara region. In terms of infant and young child feeding practices, around 85% of children in the Kara and Savanes regions continue to be breastfed beyond the age of 12 months, compared with 68.2% in the Maritime region. Despite the relatively frequent introduction of solid foods, the proportion of children achieving minimum dietary diversity remains low in all three regions, at around 20%. These results highlight the need to strengthen nutritional interventions to improve dietary diversity and meet the nutritional needs of children in Togo, particularly in vulnerable regions.

Keywords:

Children aged 6 to 23 months, Dietary diversity, Malnutrition, Savannah, Kara and Maritime regions, Togo.