

Mount Kenya University



Scaling the Heights of Education

**KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICE ON MICRONUTRIENTS
DEFICIENCIES AMONG PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS OF UNDER-
FIVES IN GATUNG'ANG'A LOCATION, MATHIRA WEST
NYERI COUNTY**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Micronutrient malnutrition is of public health importance in Kenya as it contributes substantially to the burden of disease. It contributes to a vicious cycle of under-development and to the detriment of already under privileged groups of the population. In the year 2012, health facilities in Mathira West Sub-County recorded a total of 78 malnutrition cases with 11 of them being from Gatung'ang'a location, raising public health concern. This study aimed to determine the knowledge, attitudes and practice on under-five micronutrient deficiencies among mothers and caregivers in this area. Data was collected and descriptive analysis done using SPSS.

Knowledge on micronutrients and prevention of their deficiency disorders was found to be poor among the respondents. Food preparation and feeding habits was bad with no attempt to reduce phytic acid in cereals, poor storage and use of iodized salt when cooking. Majority of the respondents (63%) gave children tea for breakfast and 86% took tea with almost every main meal. Only 42% of respondent stored salt properly in appropriate containers and 88% of respondents added salt to food immediately after frying.

Perceived foods rich in micronutrients are available locally in the study area. Majority of the respondents (81%) consume vegetables in their meals, mainly from local markets and their farms. Only 41% of respondents consume eggs at least once a month while a further 36% rarely consumed eggs, despite their availability. Fruits are also available and fairly consumed.

Deworming among children was found to be inadequate. Close to half of respondents (43%) do not deworm their children and 37% said that their children had suffered from intestinal worms at least at once. There is need to carry out health education on micronutrients, food preparation and feeding habits among the mothers and care givers in the study area. Children including, the school going, need to be dewormed regularly.