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Assessment of Dietary Diversity of Mothers and Children of 6–24months from Eastern and Southern Provinces of Zambia

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Abstract

Dietary diversity measurement has been found as an effective tool for rapid assessment of food security and nutritional status in low income settings, and as a predictor of growth among children of 6 to 24 months of age. This study aimed to carry out an assessment of mother-child pairs with focus on dietary intake, food frequency and associated factors affecting dietary in Children aged 6–24 months. A representative sample (n=400), stratified by camp and age of children was recruited from entire households in the 2 districts. Structured questionnaires including a 24-hour recall procedure was used for data collection. Food frequency and Dietary Diversity Score (DDS) were computed and Pearson correlations were used to test associations with DDS. The different foods were accounted for and the portion sizes averaged. Majority of the household heads and mothers had low-level education. About 55.4 % and 43.56 % of participant households consumed maize-based foods daily across the 2 districts. The most common mixed food recipe was maize-groundnut porridge consumed by 53.66 % and 39.31 % in Chipata and Monze districts respectively. Nshima was the most often consumed food by children with consumption of 130.1±82.86 g/day and 121.9±65.2 g/day in Chipata and Monze districts. This preference was also seen in the mothers. Mothers from Chipata had mean DDS of 5.1±1.47 with 64.38 % in the high category of DDS, while those from Monze had 4.6±1.08 with 50.85 % in the low category. There were significant correlations between DDS and mothers' educational levels across the two districts. The results of this study show a low diversity in the diet of the mothers and children.

Keywords: Dietary diversity, Diversified foods, Food frequency, Household, Maize-based foods

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