

Prevalence and Sociodemographic Determinants of Malnutrition Among Under-5 Children in Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camps in Abuja

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ABSTRACT

Malnutrition among children under five years of age continues to be a major public health concern in Nigeria, particularly among vulnerable populations living in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. This study assessed the prevalence and sociodemographic determinants of malnutrition among under-five children in three selected IDP camps, Wassa, Kuchingoro, and Area 1, within Abuja, Nigeria. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted, involving 187 caregiver–child pairs selected through multistage stratified random sampling. Data were collected using a structured, interviewer-administered questionnaire and anthropometric measurements of weight, height, and mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC), following World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. Data analysis was performed using SPSS version 25, applying descriptive statistics, Chi-square tests, and multivariable logistic regression models at a 5% significance level. The study found an overall malnutrition prevalence of 21.4% among children under five, with the highest burden observed in Wassa Camp (29%). Bivariate and multivariable analyses identified several significant determinants of malnutrition, including low caregiver education (AOR = 2.14, $p = 0.021$), child illness within the previous two weeks (AOR = 2.67, $p = 0.006$), low meal frequency (≤ 2 meals per day) (AOR = 2.93, $p = 0.003$), and incomplete immunization (AOR = 1.89, $p = 0.039$). Factors such as household size, child's age, and sex were not statistically significant. The findings highlight that socioeconomic and environmental conditions, rather than biological factors, are the key drivers of malnutrition in these displacement settings. The study concludes that addressing malnutrition in IDP camps requires integrated, multisectoral interventions encompassing nutrition education, livelihood empowerment, healthcare access, and improvements in water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure. It recommends strengthened coordination between government agencies, NGOs, and community stakeholders to ensure sustainable nutritional outcomes for displaced children in Abuja and similar contexts across Nigeria.

Keywords: Malnutrition, Under-five Children, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), Sociodemographic Determinants, Abuja, Nigeria, Nutrition Policy

