

TITLE: NUTRITIONAL STATUS OF BATSWANA AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NUTRITIONAL RISK

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LEARNING OUTCOME: To describe the nutritional status risk factors that characterize nutritional status in Botswana.

TEXT: This national cross-sectional descriptive study described results from 388 households in eight research sites stratified according to population. Non-male household heads were common and included women (54%), elderly (24%), and under 15 years of age (1%). Poverty was common with 32% earning less than 400 Pula (USD80) per month. One meal a day was common in 21% with three or more consumed by 42%. Protein sources included milk/milk products, pulses, caterpillar, and meats, yet between 31-44% said they seldom consumed protein products. Urban dwellers consumed more fruits and vegetables while rural households consumed more cereals. While 19% of those measured were underweight, obesity occurred in 14%. Rural residents experienced more underweight and urban residents tended to be more obese. There were 155 measures in under-fives that showed 23% were stunted, 26% were underweight for age, and 24% were wasted. Nutritional status of children varied according to the educational status of the household head ($p=0.009$) and rural vs. urban areas ($p=0.041$) with the primary compromise in these instances as low weight for age. There was no difference between boys and girls in markers of nutritional compromise. This work is preliminary to determine the most appropriate nutrition-related interventions for subpopulations in Botswana. Nutrition education and rehabilitation may require attention to different aspects of the diet depending on setting, educational level, and typical food intake in Batswana.

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