

MALNUTRITION IN CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY, AND ITS ASSOCIATION WITH CAREGIVER BURDEN; A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY.

Paper by Child & Adolescent research group

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION

Cerebral palsy (CP) is a common Neurodevelopmental disorder affecting children worldwide. Evidence suggests that children with cerebral palsy are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition as a result of physiological factors such as muscle spasticity, feeding difficulties, oral-motor impairment affecting chewing, food ingestion and self feeding. These factors, predisposes them to under-nutrition which causes decrease in muscle strength and maturity thereby worsening motor impairment.

AIM

To evaluate the prevalence of malnutrition and caregiver burden, and identify the factors associated with malnutrition and caregiver burden among children with cerebral palsy attending the child & adolescent mental health centre of the Federal Neuropsychiatric Hospital Yaba, Lagos.

METHODS

This cross-sectional survey included 63 children with cerebral palsy (12 months to 18 years) from the child & adolescent clinic of the CAMHSC. Anthropometric measures were taken (Weight, height, occipital circumference and Body mass index)

Caregivers rated their burden of care using the (Zarit burden Interview) . Chi-square analysis explored factors associated with being underweight and the relationship between caregiver burden

RESULTS.

The prevalence of malnutrition was very high. 69.8% of children seen during the study period were undernourished/underweight; 28.6% were of normal nutritional

states while 1.6% were overnourished. Reported difficulties with child's feeding were common and were linked with the child being underweight.

Caregiver burden was rated at 84.1% among the respondents. There were however, no association between malnutrition and sociodemographic factors tested. Neither were any statistical relationships between caregiver burden and nutritional status evident.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

There is a need for appropriate, accessible caregiver training and support around feeding practises of children with cerebral palsy, to improve child nutritional status and caregiver well-being.

Studies looking at nutritional components of food taken and methods of food preparation would further help in understanding factors associated with malnutrition. In addition, further studies are recommended to further understand the cofounders and societal issues that may improve or mitigate against perception of burden of care in this group of children.

What this paper adds: - Malnutrition and caregiver burden is very common among children with Cerebral palsy and their caregivers in CAMHSC Oshodi.

Child nutritional status was not associated with family or personal factors or caregiver burden

