

**DIETARY DIVERSITY AND NUTRITIONAL STATUS AMONG EARLY ADOLESCENTS  
AT NO.(3) BASIC EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL IN PYINMANA TOWNSHIP**

**KHIN SANDAR ZAW**

**M.B.,B.S**

**2016**

**ABSTRACT**

The school based, cross sectional descriptive study was conducted from first week of September to last week of November, 2016 to explore the dietary diversity and nutritional status of early adolescents attending at No.(3) Basic Education High School in Pyinmana Township, Nay-Pyi-Taw Division. A total number of 253 students were participated in this study.

Eighty point two percent of total study population was within normal BMI-for-age (Z-score between -2 to +1SD) and 19.8% were malnourished. Among malnourished students, 2% had severe thinness (BMI-for-age Z-score < -3SD), 11.9% had thinness (< -2SD), 4.7% were overweight (> +1SD) and 1.2% were obese (> +2SD). Ten point three percent of students were stunted (Height-for-age Z-score < -2SD). It was found that underweight prevalence of study population fell in medium prevalence and stunting prevalence was within low prevalence. More than half of the students had low knowledge level (the group with knowledge score 10.4 and less) and the remaining occupied high knowledge (score >10.4). Knowledge level and nutritional status was statistically significant (P = 0.039). The association between knowledge level and grade of the students were statistically significant (P = 0.005).

Median dietary diversity score was 8 and 64.8% of the students had low dietary diversity score (the score group of median DDS and less). Only 32.7% of males and 36.8% of females consumed more than 8 food groups. However, there was no statistically significant association between DDS and nutritional status of students. Consumption of foods outside home was found in more than half of the students; sweet foods (59.3%) and pre-packaged foods (54.5%). Thirty two point four percent of students ate grilled meats, fried meat balls and sticks and 30% of students also ate deep fried snacks. Nutritional status of students was not associated with socio-demographic characteristics of students.

This study pointed out there was high prevalence of malnutrition and stunting among middle school students in the study area. Majority of students (65.3% of males and 58.7% of females) consumed 5-8 food groups. Therefore, there is need for school health program and nutrition program to improve the nutritional status of students and nutritional knowledge of common nutrient deficiencies such as Vitamin A and iron among students, contributing to parents and then community. Healthy school environment for students should be created. Public health messages should emphasize to improve dietary diversity among children and adolescents.