

ABSTRACT

The school based, cross sectional descriptive and analytical study was conducted from last week of August to 1st week of October 2009, to investigate the nutritional status and dietary pattern among middle school children of 12 to 14 years in No(4) Basic Education Middle School (Mingaladon), Yangon Division. A total of 166 students from randomly selected school were participated in this study. BMI for age was used to assess nutritional status, and about (54.8%) of students were within normal BMI-for-age and (45.2%) were malnourished. Among them most of the students (38.0%) were underweight and (7.2%) were overweight. Dietary pattern of students were focused mainly on school time by using self-administration of 24 hour and one week food recall methods. Almost all students took lunch box and depend lunch box for their school lunch time. More than half of the students also had snacks eating habits other than lunch box. More than half of the students ate meat/fish, eggs, milk and milk products, beans, fruits and vegetables maximum three days per week. Socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender, parental education, mothers' occupation, number of family members were not significantly associated with BMI-for-age of students. Dietary pattern and nutritional knowledge level were not significantly associated with BMI-for-age of students. A gap between nutritional knowledge and dietary pattern indicating that knowledge alone is not strong in this age group for healthy eating habits. In this study, the prevalence of underweight and overweight of students should be noticed. There is need for the School Health Program to periodically monitor the school children's eating habits and physical growth. Appropriate education on nutrition should be given not only to school children but also to their teachers and parents or caregivers.