

Title: Determinants of Nutritional Status of Reproductive Age Women in Semi-Urban Bangladesh: A Community-Based Cross-Sectional Study

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Abstract: Background: Women aged 15-49 years are vulnerable to malnutrition, including undernutrition and overnutrition. This age group is crucial for maternal health and child development. The study aimed to assess the nutritional status of women aged 15-49 years in semi-urban Bangladesh and to identify its determinants. Methods: In a cross-sectional survey of 391 women, data on demographics, socioeconomic status, anthropometry, water, sanitation, and hygiene practices were collected. Nutritional status was categorized using body mass index (BMI) classification.

Results: The mean BMI of the participants was 24.5 ± 3.8 . Only 5.9% were underweight and 49.4% were normal weight. However, 35.3% were overweight and 9.5% were obese. Regression analysis showed that formal education up to the secondary level and handwashing with only water or water with ash or soil were determinants of maternal nutritional status. Women with secondary education were 4.2 times more likely to be adequately nourished than women with no education. Women who practiced handwashing with only water or water with ash or soil were 78% and 63% more likely to be malnourished, respectively, than women who used soap along with water. Conclusion: This study highlighted the shifting nutritional landscape among women in semi-urban Bangladesh, with increasing rates of overweight and obesity. Formal education and handwashing practices are important determinants of maternal nutritional status. Multifaceted interventions are needed to address these challenges and improve maternal health in this population.

Key words: Malnutrition Nutrition Obesity BMI Bangladesh

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