

The Role of Nutritional Information in Addressing Under-Five Child Malnutrition in Tanzania

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Abstract

The paper discusses the role of nutritional information for addressing under-five child malnutrition in Tanzania. The paper is based on a master's dissertation whose objective was to determine the sources of nutritional information used to provide nutritional information to mothers in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) clinics, to investigate variables that determine accessibility and use of nutritional information and the sources of information routinely consulted by mothers when seeking nutritional information. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from 150 mother-child pairs and 25 health workers randomly selected from selected MCH clinics around Morogoro Urban District. The study found that although the MCH health and nutrition education sessions are an important aspect in disseminating nutritional information to mothers, these sessions were seldom conducted and the attendance of mothers to these sessions was poor. Radio and oral communication from friends and colleagues were the most commonly used sources of information and education is the most important variable that determines use and access to nutritional information. The study concludes that access to reliable nutritional information is an important aspect in addressing child malnutrition and therefore efforts should be made to ensure that mothers have access to adequate and reliable nutritional information through establishment of information units within the MCH clinic and paying more attention to less educated women when providing information.